THE CAMP BY COPPER RIVER

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THE CAMP BY COPPER RIVER

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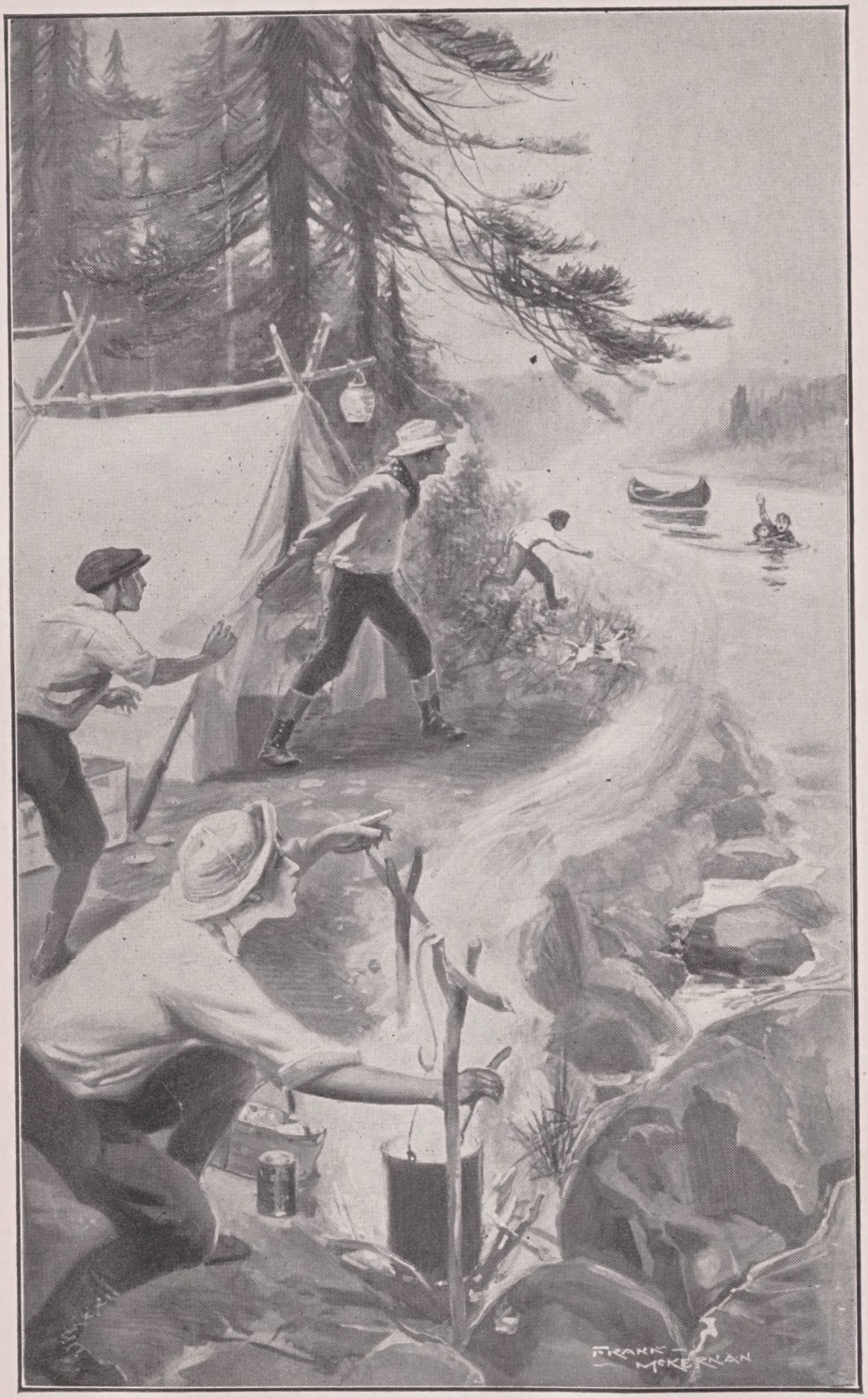


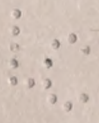
"UP FROM THE RIVER CAME A CRY AND A CALL FOR HELP."
—PAGE 72.

THE
CAMP BY COPPER RIVER

BY

Rev. HENRY S. SPALDING, S.J.

Author of "The Old Mill on the Withrose," "The Race for Copper Island," etc.



NEW YORK, CINCINNATI, CHICAGO

BENZIGER BROTHERS

PRINTERS TO THE HOLY APOSTOLIC SEE | PUBLISHERS OF BENZIGER'S MAGAZINE

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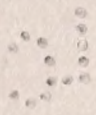

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The Camp by Copper River

CHAPTER I

"Hogan's Flop"

"I'VE got one for you." That was the message over the telephone. No explanation was given; none was needed.

What was it this "one," this indifferent thing? Was it a thing of life? With or without life, it seemed to have little value with the man who sent the message. Was it a trifle, a toy, a dog? It was simply "one." Yes, but that word "one" had a meaning for Father Lilly, who received the message. The rough voice, the late hour, the dread, zero weather—all these were parts of the message. The priest prepared to go at once and look after the nameless "one"; but before he could leave the room the telephone rang a second time.

"Have you room for a boy to-night?" came the inquiry.

"Yes, for ten—as many as there are in the city."

"Can I come with him at once?"

"Yes, yes."

"I'll be there in half an hour."

"Walk in and wait for me in the office. I am going out for a short time." With these words Father Lilly put on his heavy coat and went out into the street. At six o'clock the thermometer had registered twelve below zero; it was probably lower now, and down Jackson Street swept a wind that cut like steel. After walking half a block the priest returned, put a light overcoat under his heavier one, pulled his cap over his ears, and started off again.

Ten minutes brought Father Lilly to Halsted and West Madison Streets. Night or day, these avenues of trade and pleasure are crowded; but the extreme cold had driven pleasure-seekers within doors and the streets were all but deserted.

"Shoe-strings, sir, just five cents so I can get a bed to-night."

Father Lilly looked at the lame, shriveled creature, whose pinched and wrinkled face was neither that of a man nor boy. He wore but a light coat and no gloves.

"My boy, you will freeze here," were the words of pity.

"No, sir, I run into the saloon and warm up every few minutes."

"Come here," said the priest, whose heart was touched. In the shadow of a door he quickly removed his heavy coat, took off the lighter one and put it on the shivering stranger. "Take these gloves," he said. "How much do you need to get a bed?"

"Only five cents."

"Where?"

"At Hogan's Flop."

"Take this," and he put a quarter into the trembling hand.

"Meet me at the Flop in half an hour. Now hurry out of the cold and get something to eat."

With a "thanks" upon his lips, the night vender shrank away, and the priest hurried down Madison Street. Across the river shone the

lights of the La Salle Hotel. Here were the two extremes of life, found in every city, and Chicago was no exception to the rule. On one side of the river, within ten minutes' walk, were palatial hotels, luxury, and refinement; on the other side were wretched boarding-houses, with suffering, want, and misery.

Father Lilly turned into a side street, if street it could be called, for the dark and dirty passage was little more than an alley. He threw open a door and stood before the office of Tom Hogan, the proprietor of Hogan's Flop.

Tom Hogan had never sought publicity and yet his boarding-house was as well known and advertised as any hotel in Chicago. Do what he would he could not keep his establishment and its mode of operation from appearing regularly in the city press. Almost at the risk of their lives reporters stole into the dingy apartment and managed to get snap-shots of the manager and his boarders; visitors, who feared to venture in, walked on the opposite side of the street and saw at least the dismal front of the Flop; students of sociology disguised as tramps spent

nights there, and wrote up long articles about the solution to the question of the day's outcasts.

But with Tom Hogan it was all simple charity. He had come to the city on a lake vessel years before and when his funds failed he all but froze and starved. Then he determined to do something for others who might fare as he had fared. He started a hotel for tramps, and five cents a night was all he charged. Renting an old factory he built two platforms, which extended six feet from the walls. These tiers took the place of beds, and for pillows hard, narrow boards eight inches high were used. There was no ceremony or registering in this boarding-house. At the entrance was a small, dingy place enclosed with old boxes and dignified by the name of office. Here the frequenters paid a nickel and then, stumbling up the narrow stairs, threw themselves on the hard tiers without removing their clothes. They simply "flopped" down where there was room. Hence Hogan's Hotel was soon dubbed "Hogan's Flop," and this name it kept despite the objections of the proprietor.

As the law prohibited Tom Hogan from receiving inmates under sixteen he not unfrequently turned over his younger applicants to Father Lilly. When, therefore, he had on this particular night informed the priest that he had "one," the message needed no explanation.

"He won't talk and I don't know his name," said Tom when Father Lilly appeared at the office. "You kin have 'im."

"I won't go!"

"Yes you will, my lad, yes you will!"

"Of course he will," put in the priest. "You have got only boards for him to sleep on, and I have a fine soft bed."

"I won't go!"

"Why?"

"None of your business!"

"Yes it is my business. I like boys. I have come out this cold night to take care of you; for you would have to leave this place and would freeze on the streets in an hour."

"If he puts me out, I will freeze or go to jail, but I won't go with you."

"I am the friend of every boy," pleaded the

priest, without seeming to notice the remarks of the youth.

"You are not my friend; I never had a friend." The lad turned away from the two men.

"Come," said the priest, "come with me."

The lad leaped to his feet and with a terrible oath defied his would-be friend.

Tom Hogan seized the youngster by the collar. "Read that sign," he cried, pointing to a rough daub on the wall: "No cussin' here."

The boy was finally quieted, and, after some threats to have him sent to jail, finally consented to accompany the priest; but only with the understanding that he was to be allowed to leave the priest's quarters on the following morning.

Just at this moment the poor shoe-string vender came in, and with thanks handed the priest the borrowed overcoat.

"You had your supper?" asked the latter.

"Yes, and a good one; it cost fifteen cents—beans and a big piece of pork. I only wish I could get that much every night." The lame vender paid his nickel and hobbled up the steps to find a resting place on the hard wood.

"This overcoat is for you," explained the priest, turning to the lad.

"It ain't."

"But I say it is. I was bringing it to you when I met the poor fellow, and let him have it under the condition that he would bring it here."

"I don't want it."

"But it is cold outside and you'll freeze to death before you get home with the Father," remonstrated the proprietor.

"I don't care if I do freeze," snapped the outcast.

"But we care," argued Father Lilly mildly, for he never lost his patience in dealing with this class of boys. He knew that a harsh reply would drive the youngster away.

"Give me your coat!" demanded the little vagrant.

"Why of course," yielded the priest, "you may have it, and I will wear the old one."

"No you don't, your riverence," interposed Hogan. "You jump right into that coat," said he, turning to the boy, "and do it quick!" With these words he thrust the lad's arms into the

coat and buttoned it. "Just a little too big," he said with a laugh. "But it will help to keep the wind away from your legs this cold night."

"I will help you to get one that will fit, if you are only willing to work," put in the priest.

"I don't want any to fit."

"I'll git you one that won't fit, if you want to be contrary," said Hogan. "If the Father wanted to git you a new one, you want an old one; and if he wanted to git you an old one, you want a new one. Contrary, that's what you want to be!"

"He is just a little sleepy and tired," pleaded the priest. "But you haven't told us your name, my little fellow," and Father Lilly stroked him kindly upon the head.

"Ain't got none," he snarled.

"Yes, you is," said Hogan. "Contrary, that's your name, contrary it be!"

"He will give us his real name later. I am going to see the men," explained the priest to the proprietor. "Wait for me here," said he to the lad. "I will be back in a few minutes."

Up the dim and screeching steps went the

priest. It was a visit that he often made. Occasionally he was called to administer a Sacrament there; but often uninvited he went into this den where humanity was caged. Young students of sociology had made a rapid inspection of this lodging-place, and had written social articles to prove that the human race was degenerating. Truly it was the last resort of the outcasts of twentieth century civilization. Yet Father Lilly did not view it with the eyes of a pessimist. He could tell you the story of heroic lives that had passed away in that house and upon those rough boards; men who in their struggles against misfortune had sunk lower and lower in poverty; but who had risen superior to the grosser temptations of life.

At the top of the first landing the priest paused. A large stove kept the room fairly warm even on this cold night. Two dingy oil lamps made it possible to find one's way to the tiers, and also with an effort to read the signs upon the walls: "No cussin' "; "No smokin' or loud talkin' after ten o'clock"; "If you want to fight, join the army."

As the priest had his heavy coat buttoned high about his neck and his fur cap pulled over his head, no one would have recognized him as a clergyman. He thought that he would give the hard boards a trial.

"Room in here?" he asked of an inmate who was sitting upon the edge of the tier taking a last smoke before his night's rest.

"Always room," grunted the man.

"Cold out to-night," said the priest in an unconventional tone. But there was no answer. "Do you find these boards hard?" he continued.

"Go on!" growled the man, "you'll find out before morning that there is no feathers under you."

"Not even a pillow," remarked the priest as he laid his head back against the hard board.

"What do you want for a nickel?" This man seemed a defender of the reputation of the place.

"Do you think I'll be able to sleep?"

"Let others sleep," protested one opposite him.

"You can talk till ten o'clock," said the man with the pipe, at the same time stretching himself by the side of the priest.

He was an old seaman, so he said, and had some money, but preferred to save it. Accustomed as he was to sleep on decks and coils of rope, he did not seriously object to the rough, hard boards on which he then lay. He informed the visitor that not all the men sleeping in this strange apartment were bad. Most of them were down and out, but many still earned an honest dollar. He held in contempt a certain class of professional beggars, many of whom were sound of limb, but by carrying crutches lived on the sympathy of the people.

Just then a loud gong sounded—the signal for ten o'clock and silence. The men obeyed with the precision of soldiers, for down in the basement was a narrow prison into which any one was cast who disturbed the weary sleepers.

The priest slipped away to the office, talked a while with Tom, then, awakening his young charge, who had fallen asleep in his chair, prepared to depart.

Five minutes later Father Lilly and his young charge, facing the cutting zero wind, were hurrying down Madison Street to the Boys' Home.

CHAPTER II

Boys But Not Friends

RETURNING to his office at the Boys' Home, Father Lilly found a man and a boy waiting for him.

"My name is Kevin," said the stranger, grasping the priest's hand. He was a powerful man, dark-featured and sturdy.

"You should be on the police force," remarked Father Lilly, admiring the soldier-like form of the man before him.

"So I was; and perhaps I should have remained on the force; I am doing a little police work to-night."

"You didn't arrest this fine fellow?" And the priest stooped and gathered into his arms the frightened lad, whose name was Will Starling.

"No, he wasn't arrested; he came of his own choice. My wife met him on the street, where he was begging, and brought him to our house

for supper. We didn't have an empty bed to keep him over night."

"Came from the farm, I suppose?" asked the priest of the boy.

"Yes," drolled out the little stranger.

"Shake hands," said Father Lilly, drawing the two lads together, "shake hands and be friends."

"I don't want to shake," blurted out the nameless one from the Flop.

"You don't have to," replied Will Starling.

"Of course I don't and I won't."

Mr. Kevin upbraided them for their conduct in the presence of the priest, who was doing so much for them. But Father Lilly interposed with a kind word and motioned the lads to take chairs.

He then drew out a history-sheet to take down some facts about young Starling. He was sixteen years old. His parents, who had spent a shiftless life, renting farms in western Illinois, failing in every case to pay rent, were now in jail for stealing. The boy had lived with them until their arrest. He made his way to Chicago, where he was begging along the streets until by

chance he met Mrs. Kevin. These were all the facts that could be ascertained about him.

"What can you do in the way of work?" asked the priest.

"Drive horses."

"Had much practice?"

"Lots of it, down home."

"Helped your father?" put in Mr. Kevin.

"Yes."

"Could you drive an express wagon?"

"Any wagon."

"It is much harder to drive through the city than it is through a field or along a road where there is nothing to hit," explained Mr. Kevin.

"I can drive a team through our gate, and most people couldn't do that." This feat was more difficult than it appeared from the boy's mere statement, for on one of the farms which the Starlings had rented, the gate at the entrance to the lane leading to the barn was so narrow that it barely admitted a wagon.

"I've several calls from the Northern Express Company," said the priest, "and can probably start him to-morrow."

"This is quite satisfactory; when he gets settled down we want him to call at our house occasionally."

"Kind of you," admitted the priest.

"I want to drive; but I won't stay here long. I want to drive somewhere else."

"And where?" asked Father Lilly.

"Clay Banks," said the boy with a whimper.

"As far as I make out," explained Mr. Kevin, "the last farm that the parents of this boy rented went by the name of Clay Banks, a rather poor place which got its name from a peculiar red clay along the hills. It's the ambition of this boy to own that farm."

"There," said Father Lilly, "that's a worthy ambition." Turning to the lad he exclaimed, "I'll see to it that you own that farm."

"And can I find pa and ma and bring them there?"

"We'll do our best to help you."

"And you won't make me stay and work for you?" and Will Starling looked into the strange face of Father Lilly.

"The boys here are free to come and go when they please," explained the priest.

"Then I'm going to-night," whipped out the nameless youth from the Flop.

"You stay here and learn a little manners," and Kevin turned upon the boy, thinking to crush him by his bold look.

But the boy threw back a wild defiance with an oath. "I'm not your hired man," he said, "and I'll go when I please."

"We do not intend to keep you against your will," acknowledged the priest mildly; "but you have promised to stay to-night. To-morrow morning you are free."

The boy sank back again into the chair and covered his face with his hands. But imagining that he had again been overlooked in the interest shown for young Starling, he leaped to his feet and cried out: "I am going to-night, none of youse cares for this guy; you don't care for me. I'm going to-night even if I do freeze."

"We have to settle the affair for this boy before the gentleman leaves," Father Lilly tried to explain.

"He's no better than I am; and I met you first."

"You will not be neglected."

"You bet I won't; but I am going to knock the head off of that ninny before I go." With this threat he leaped toward young Starling, only to be seized by the strong arm of Mr. Kevin.

"Let 'im come, I ain't afraid of 'im!" and now both boys were held at arm's length, while the former policeman gave them some good advice. "I think I'd let you fight if you were not in the priest's house, and when the fight was over, I'd make you hug and kiss each other."

When the lads were quieted Mr. Kevin departed.

Alone with the boys the priest spoke to them kindly, then asked them to kneel with him and say night prayers. A blank gaze was the only response and with sorrow, but not surprise, the minister of God learned that neither had ever been taught to pray. It was too late that night for instruction and the lads were in no humor to receive it. The glare in their eyes convinced

the priest that there would be a fight the first time they were alone.

Not to disturb the other inmates who were asleep in the large dormitory, the priest put the newcomers in small private rooms, wished them each a good rest, and went back to his office.

Three years had passed since Father Lilly had undertaken the work of caring for the wayward boys of Chicago. Reared himself in one of the poorer sections of the city and acquainted with the various paths that lead downward in the road of youthful life, he was well equipped to help the boy who needed a home, a friend, or good advice. He built a new home for the boys and started a printing plant. Day after day he attended the juvenile court, sat listening to the cases, and, when he felt that he could amend the ways of a delinquent, he asked the privilege of the judge to take the boy to the Home and give him a chance. His prudence and judgment could be relied upon, and the judge generally acquiesced to the priest's request.

Early next morning the nameless boy awoke. Revenge was still in his heart. Cautiously he

crept into the room of the one whom he had met the night before, and for whom through jealousy he conceived such hatred.

"Wake up!" Young Starling felt a hand upon his shoulder, and, opening his eyes, saw standing over him the nameless boy with whom he had attempted to fight.

"Get out!" he muttered, "it's dark, and I'm sleepy!"

"Come on and fight," was the challenge of his companion.

"Get out! Get out!"

"I could've knocked your head off while you're asleep, but I've giv'n you a chance. Come on and come quick. I'll lick you, and beat it before that priest is awake."

"I am a game rooster," retorted Starling, leaping from the bed.

Before the boys could exchange blows the door opened, and in walked Father Lilly, who had anticipated trouble, and the escape of the nameless one.

"It's too early to fight, boys," he interposed.

"If I can't fight 'im I'll fight you," cried the

boy without a name. With this he leaped at the priest. Father Lilly seized him firmly and held him as in a vise. "You get back into your bed," he said to young Starling. Then he forced the other boy out of the room into his own office.

"What can I do for you?" he asked of the enraged lad as he put him down into a large chair.

No answer.

"Have I not tried to be kind to you?"

"You helped that other guy first."

"But I could not keep the man waiting."

"Go on! Let me out of here!"

"We never keep a boy against his will. I want you to understand that this is not a jail."

"It's worse than a jail! Let me go!"

"You may go at once. But can't I give you some warm coffee and a little bread before you leave the place? It's still below zero and you may find it hard to get a breakfast."

"I don't want none."

"So you insist on going."

"Let me go!" and the boy arose from the chair.

This was a strange case. The boy was in the

full possession of his senses, the priest saw that. As miserable and friendless as he was he had been angered because another boy had been cared for first. Nothing could induce the lad to remain or to take a cup of coffee. Father Lilly walked with him to the door and opened it. "If you are in need," said he kindly, "you will find a friend here."

The boy glared at him, struck him, and dashed down the steps out into the cold.

That afternoon the priest read of the arrest of a boy for stealing cakes from a bakery. There was some reference which made him suspect that his nameless friend was the culprit.

Father Lilly was at court next morning, recognized the lad, and heard his sentence of four months in the house of correction.

A week later Father Lilly called at the office of the reformatory and learned that the boy had been put in the kitchen. With the permission of the official he interviewed the cook, told him of the experiences of the week previous and asked him to treat the young culprit with the greatest kindness.

The cook agreed to do what he could, and true to his word he overlooked every fault and finally won the boy over by his kindness. He had promised the priest to let him know when the little prisoner's time expired; but, unfortunately, he forgot to do so. One morning the nameless boy, who had borne but a number, was released.

He walked from the reformatory subdued indeed and repentant, but friendless and penniless.

Days passed. He could get no work. Ragged and hungry he slipped into an employment agency one morning, told the man at the desk that he could cook, and asked whether there was a vacancy anywhere. He owned up, when questioned, that he had learned to cook in a reformatory.

There were no vacancies in the hotels; besides, who would hire this dirty, ragged creature to work in a clean kitchen.

In despair the boy moved across the room and sat on a bench.

CHAPTER III

The Governor

NO ONE could tell why Uncle Charles was called the Governor, for he did anything but govern. Alice, who was now twelve, could remember how even as a child of seven she could persuade the Governor to come or go at her bidding. He seemed to work and earn money just to take care of her and to satisfy her every wish. If Alice wished to play dolls on the floor the Governor had to get down on his knees and amuse her; if she wished to walk he walked with her; if she wished to swing he sat with her in the big swing for hours. As for money—she just reached into his pockets and took whole fortunes. Her mother often complained of the Governor's liberality; but it was all of no use. His whole pleasure seemed to consist in satisfying the whims of the children.

Walter did not take as much of the Governor's time as did his younger sister, Alice; but he got

more of his money. No boy at the private academy was as well provided with pocket money as was Walter Stanley. He was fourteen now and was just finishing his first year of high-school work. He had been promised a rather large gift in gold if he led his class, but he had already lost all hopes of gathering in the treasure. Though not a leader, he was by no means dull; though not an athlete he was fond of games, and his ready pocket-money to secure balls and bats enabled him to demand a position in class contests, but he had little chance or ambition to be a member of the regular academy teams. What added to his popularity was that he had permission from the Governor to pick a companion for a camping expedition into northern Michigan during the coming vacation.

Charles Sherwood was a middle-aged bachelor who lived with his widowed sister and her two children, Alice and Walter. The children would not have recognized the name if he had been addressed as Mr. Sherwood or Uncle Charles; to them he was simply the Governor—just the Governor—only the Governor. We were mistaken

when we said that he never governed. In one thing he had his way—he would not buy a villa. Every year he gave the children a vacation. He had enjoyed the trip on the Great Lakes, he had hired a private yacht to fish red snappers in the Gulf of Mexico, he had visited the Pacific coast. But the children wanted a real villa of their own —some place where they could live in a snug little cottage all the summer. Mr. Sherwood would not yield on this point. As long as he had the money, he said, he would give them a vacation, but he liked variety. It would make vacation monotonous to spend it in the same place every year. The Governor gave numerous instances where people of means had erected beautiful and costly villas, only to grow tired of them in a few seasons. So on this one point the Governor really governed.

One June morning Charles Sherwood left his office in the Fowler Furniture Company, and walked down Wabash Avenue, Chicago, to an employment agency. He owned some stock in the company and had charge of a large part of the business.

"I am looking for a cook for a camping expedition," said he to the man at the desk in the agency.

"Very particular?" asked the man as he tapped upon the lid of the desk with his pencil.

"Well, he must be able to cook, if you call that being particular—some one who can make coffee, fry ham and eggs, and just work in general."

"I see—you don't want a French chef."

"No, we are going to rough it in the Michigan woods—in fact, I can lend a little help myself."

"Will you have a stove?" the agent wanted to know.

"Nonsense," grunted Mr. Sherwood, "we are going miles from any town; all that we can take are a few pots and pans, and that is all."

"How would that fellow fill the bill?" and the clerk pointed toward a boy who sat at one side on a rough bench. He was in rags, was dirty and repulsive. His face was wizen and bore evident marks of want and suffering. In fact, the gaping figure was half idiotic in its meaningless stare.

"Can you cook?" asked Sherwood in pity.

"Been helpin' for four months."

"Where were you helping?"

"In the—the—"

"Well," put in Sherwood, "in the what?"

"In the—the State reformatory," gasped the boy in words of despair.

There was a pause. "How long is it since you left the place?" said the man at the desk. "Tell the gentleman all about it—about yourself, just as you told me a few minutes ago."

"Long on three weeks, sirs, and I ain't had much to eat since. Can't get no work. People won't have me. They ask me where I was last and when I tell 'em they kick me out."

"Were you honorably dismissed?" Sherwood wanted to know.

"Yes, sir," and the boy felt in his pocket for his paper of dismissal and recommendation.

Mr. Sherwood read it, then he looked at the poor wretch. He was no longer Charles Sherwood, the business man, but the Governor with Alice and Walter. "Do you want a chance to start life over?" he inquired.

"Yes, sir."

"Do you use any profane language?" As there was no answer the Governor went on: "Do you curse and swear any?"

"Lots of times."

"Can you correct yourself, that is, can you stop swearing?"

"Don't know, sir, I never tried it."

"See here," exclaimed Sherwood," turning to the agent at the desk, "there will be some young schoolboys with me and I don't want any profanity. But about the cooking," he resumed again, addressing the boy. "Can you cook for five people?"

"I helped cook for five hundred."

"What did you do?"

"Most everything."

"Not very satisfactory," mused the man; still he had become interested in the outcast and was determined to give him a chance. "You can cut wood, make a fire, and wash dishes. Between us we can do the cooking. Let us strike a bargain right here. How much do you want for being agent?" he asked of the man at the desk.

"I will be satisfied with five dollars."

"Too much," argued the business man, "I will give you three dollars."

The man accepted the offer.

"And what are your terms?" asked Sherwood of the boy.

"Just somethin' to eat," said the lad.

"Oh, I'll do better than that. You need something to wear, and those shoes—why you can't even call them shoes. Still they'll do over night. I am busy the rest of the day, but to-morrow morning I'll have time to fit you out for the trip. Here is my card and business address. Can you find the Fowler Furniture Store?"

"Yes, sir," replied the boy, taking the card.

"How much will a bed cost you to-night?"

"Fifteen cents."

"But you can get one for a quarter—a little better than usual."

"I ain't had any kind for two weeks," interposed the boy.

"Try one to-night just for a change," said the man. "Here is a dollar," he continued, "seventy-five cents for three meals and twenty-five for the

bed. One thing more, my boy, are you sure that you will meet me as you have promised?"

"My word and honor, sir."

"And why were you arrested?" asked Mr. Sherwood as the two left the agency and walked out on Dearborn Street.

"For most everything, sir."

"And you have determined to reform, to turn over a new leaf—what put this into your head?"

"'Cause—'cause, the cook was kind to me."

"Was no one ever kind to you before?"

"One fellow wanted to be, but I wouldn't let him then; but I'll look him up some day and 'pologize."

"That's good. Now about the cursing. You mustn't use any bad words of any kind, for there will be four young boys in the party, and I don't want you to set them a bad example. They are polite, and it will do you good to be in their company for a few weeks." The street was blocked by traffic, and while the man and boy waited, the former continued to give advice and to explain to the lad what an advantage he would enjoy in the company of the academy students.

The boy promised to try his best. The cook in the reformatory had been kind and kindness had won his heart. He would try not to curse, he would try to be polite, he would try to do anything that was right, because he had promised the cook. Again and again he had promised the cook to do what was right, after the cook had been kind to him.

Mr. Sherwood wanted the boy's name and address.

His name was Zip.

"That must be your nickname," argued the man. But it was the only name that the boy knew. He had been called Zip by his little companions at the orphan asylum in New York; if he had a second name he did not know it. He had been placed with a farmer somewhere in the east, had run away to escape cruel treatment, and finally been arrested for stealing. This was the life history of the boy who called himself Zip.

"Since I am going to adopt you into the family, suppose I give you my name," suggested Mr. Sherwood. "I will call you Charles Zip."

The lad was pleased with the idea. There in the crowded thoroughfare of Chicago, Charles Zip received the name that he will bear throughout this story, and that he is still carrying through life. The reader, no doubt, recognizes him as the "one," the nameless "one," whom Father Lilly had taken to the Boys' Home from Hogan's Flop on the cold February night.

Of course Charles Zip had no address to give, for he had been sleeping in the parks, in alleys, in barns—just anywhere to escape the vigilance of the police and the inclemency of the weather.

At the entrance of the Fowler Furniture Store, Charles Sherwood parted with his young namesake. "Meet me here to-morrow noon," said he, "and I will buy you everything that you need for the vacation trip."

"You and the cook are kind to me," repeated the boy as he pressed the hand of his new benefactor.

Half an hour later an officer walked into the private office of Mr. Sherwood dragging young Charles Zip roughly after him.

"Mr. Sherwood?" asked the official.

"I am the gentleman, sir."

"This boy claims that you gave him a dollar bill this morning."

"I did, sir," was the curt reply.

"Yesterday," explained the officer, "he begged for something to eat at a restaurant, saying that he had not a cent; to-day he came in with a dollar bill, and the proprietor concluded that the boy stole it. He called me in to arrest him. The youngster claimed that you gave him the dollar bill; I just brought him in to find out whether he spoke the truth."

"Dragg'd me like a dog," whimpered the boy, "and sir-sir-I broke my promise not to cuss. I cuss'd the officer. What can a poor fellow do?" he went on, looking up as he talked, into the face of Charles Sherwood. "If I ain't got no money they cop me, and if I is got money they cop me."

"Only an accident," pleaded Mr. Sherwood. "You can't blame the officer for doing his duty."

"Quite right," snapped the man in blue.

"But you will have no more trouble with this boy. I have taken him in charge. To-morrow I'll fit him out with what he needs, and the day

after he starts with me for northern Michigan. When he comes back I'll see that he gets a chance to start life over."

The officer bowed himself out. Mr. Sherwood gave the boy four quarters instead of the dollar bill, added two more as a compensation for his trouble, and dismissed him with assuring words.

"You and the cook has been kind to me," he muttered as he left the office.

CHAPTER IV

Hard to Make a Choice

WALTER STANLEY had become the most popular boy at the Devon Academy, for it had been rumored that his rich uncle, who was to take him on a long vacation trip, had given him the privilege of choosing a companion. Moreover, all the expenses of the latter were to be paid. Walter was met by boys singly and in small groups, at street corners and on his way to school. He was surrounded by admiring friends during recess, and was smiled upon during the solemn hours of class. Even the professor was surprised at the round of applause that he received after reading a composition. In fact the composition was not without its merit. Entitled, "Fishing Red Snappers in the Gulf of Mexico," it gave an account of a ten days' trip to the red snapper banks, the thrill of pride and pleasure as the fisherman dragged a fifteen-pound

prize through ninety feet of water, and finally, of an adventure with a shark, which was lured to the surface and harpooned by an old sailor.

Incidentally, it was learned by the entire class that the rich uncle was rather prodigal during his vacation trip, for he had chartered a special fishing-smack for his sail to the snapper-banks in the Gulf of Mexico.

As vacation drew on, Walter's selection had narrowed down to three boys.

Ferdinand Eggert seemed to have the best chance. He had three nicknames, "Spider," "Legs," and "Wireless." Although a boy of only fifteen he was nearly six feet tall. On the first day of school he had been dubbed "Spider-legs;" but his companions finally shortened the name, some calling him "Spider," and others addressing him as "Legs." Many of the boys called him "Wireless," as he had a wireless outfit which he took great delight in explaining to visitors. He had written short articles for a scientific magazine, and had made some alterations in the receiver which had attracted the attention of experts. Walter Stanley had been a

frequent visitor to the mysterious garret and its outfit long before there was a question of a companion for vacation.

John Newell, though not an academy boy, was making the most persistent effort to win over Walter Stanley. He made no secret of the matter. His chief characteristic was boldness. He was rather slim for a boy of fourteen. His features were sharp, with a nose unusually long and pointed. His face was flushed and gave the effect of continual excitement. He talked so much of the coming trip to the northern Michigan woods that many boys considered the affair settled. In fact, John so regarded it. As his father was not without means he was determined to go with Walter even if he had to force himself upon the company and pay his way.

Carroll Cage was the third candidate. It was some days before the professor had been able to distinguish him from Walter Stanley at the beginning of the year. Even after a month had passed they deceived him by changing desks and neckties. They were the same height, with the same full face, with hair black and bushy, with

the same innocent, irrepressible laugh. Walter was better dressed, but Carroll's clothes were always neat and tidy. While the Cages were not poor, the family was large and the father could not afford to spend money on a long vacation trip. When Walter first announced to his friend the promised trip to the Michigan trout stream, the latter raised his hands as if uttering a prayer, and expressed the delight there must be in such an outing; but he did not ask to be chosen for the trip. He was too modest to make such a request. Still unconsciously he had made an appeal, and that appeal went to the heart of his friend.

"Well, Walter," said Uncle Charles as they sat down to supper one night, "have you chosen a companion?"

"I think I'll have to take three," answered the boy.

"Not if your Uncle Charles knows it," came the objection.

"And he has to keep something to pay for ma and me at Detroit," put in Alice.

"But I can't make a choice," returned Walter,

"it isn't as easy as taking a piece of bread," and with this he helped himself from the bread-pan. "You see, bread don't care; you can take any old piece and the other pieces won't object. But it is different with boys, if I pick one the other two—well——"

"Well," took up Uncle Charles, as Walter paused. "Well or no well, I can't pay the bill, so there the matter ends."

"It is just this way," argued Walter. "Ferd Eggert says he will put up a wireless and get the news every day from the closest city. That will save stamps and papers."

The Governor laughed. "How much will he save?"

"Lots," replied the boy.

"And he will cost me fifty dollars for every one that he saves. I can't see the argument."

"Then John Newell begs me every day," went on the boy.

"Does he imagine that I have inherited the Morgan estate?" the Governor wanted to know.

"Carroll Cage just looks at me all day and smiles," continued Walter; "but I know what he

is thinking about. It will just break his heart if he hears that he can't go."

"Let me see," said the Governor, putting down his knife and fork and counting with his fingers. "One boy has a wireless outfit and therefore I, Charles Rockefeller Sherwood, must pay his expenses for a summer vacation. Number two just begs every day to go and therefore I, Charles Carnegie Sherwood, must pay his expenses for a summer vacation. Another boy, whom we shall call number three, just smiles all day and for these smiles, I, Charles Morgan Sherwood, must pay his expenses for a summer vacation. As far as I can figure out I, Charles Rockefeller Carnegie Morgan Sherwood, will have to make an assignment before September."

This seemed to settle the matter for Alice; but Walter was not so ready to yield. "Perhaps John Newell will pay his own way," said he.

"Even so," put in Mrs. Stanley, who thus far had only smiled at the demands of her son, "I do not want him to go. He may be a good boy, but I must tell you plainly, Walter, that I do not like him."

Just then the telephone rang. It was John Newell with the news that his father would pay his expenses for the trip.

"There, mother," said Walter, as he hung up the receiver, "we can't say no, since he will pay his way."

"Yes, your uncle can refuse to take him."

"But he is not a bad boy," pleaded Walter.

"He may not be," said the mother, and addressing Uncle Charles she continued, "I have never liked this boy, John Newell. My advice would be to leave him at home."

"Suppose he comes along on the same train and to the same place; we couldn't stop him," added Charles Sherwood.

"I don't see what you have got against him," Walter wanted to know.

"Your uncle is in charge of the arrangements," added the mother. "If he is willing to take the boy, let him do so. I have expressed my opinion. I don't suppose that he will do any harm during the trip."

John Newell being finally settled, there was the further question of the other two boys. Walter did not see how the expedition could possibly

start without Ferdinand Eggert and his wireless outfit; still there was the silent pleading of Carroll Cage.

Although the Governor seemed to reject every plea of the boy, still the mother noticed that he was gradually weakening. Little Alice listened with no small amount of consternation to the elaborate preparations, and wondered whether there would be anything left of her uncle's bank account to defray the expenses to Detroit.

Ten times the Governor said "No" to Walter's request. Ten times the request was repeated. Finally Uncle Charles got angry, which was, as usual, but a prelude to his yielding.

The door-bell rang and in walked Ferdinand Eggert. He had a promise from his father to pay for his railroad ticket, and had convinced himself that he would secure work of some kind to pay for his meals.

Uncle Charles, who was just on the point of offering to pay for all the expenses, readily yielded to the request of supplying the deficit.

It only remained to inform Carroll Cage that he would join the expedition, and to await the time of departure.

CHAPTER V

Bound for the Pine Forest

YOU would not have known Charlie Zip. He scarcely recognized himself when he looked into the large mirror in the furnishing store, where he had met his benefactor. Everything he wore was new; he had changes of linen in a suit-case, and carried a bundle containing his old clothes, which were to be washed and used for his working outfit.

When he passed through the great doors of the Northwestern depot on Madison Street, Chicago, he felt that he was leaving his past life behind him and was entering upon a new era. He had made firm resolutions, and now the time had come when he was to put his resolve to a test.

At the depot he had met his four boy companions, for, although he came along in the capacity of a cook, he had the assurance that he would be regarded as one of the party. He had

shaken hands with each of the boys from the Devon Academy, and had been impressed by their cordial greeting. He entered the coach and took a seat with Mr. Sherwood. John Newell sat beside Walter Stanley, and in front of them were Ferdinand Eggert and Carroll Cage. Walter's dog, Dover, was securely resting in the baggage-car.

And now the train was off. The Governor pulled out a note-book and carefully checked off every item for the camp.

"I don't think that I have forgotten a single thing," he remarked to Charlie Zip. "I even thought of the thread and needles to mend our clothes; I have found from experience that they come in handy."

"I can help you out on that; I am better at sewin' than cookin'."

"When did you learn?" the man wanted to know.

"Just had to l'arn myself when I was trampin' it."

"But that is all past now," and the Governor turned the subject to the camp and its outfit.

"Is it true about the bears?" asked Charlie, as he caught a part of the conversation of the four boys in front of him.

"Quite a number in the woods, I am told," affirmed Mr. Sherwood.

"Real bears, like you see in the circus?"

"Just the same."

"Will they hug you to death?"

"Not in the summer time. They get plenty to eat along the river—crawfish and the like," was the explanation; "but in the winter, when it is cold and the snow is deep, they kill sheep and pigs. I have heard of them hurting but few persons."

"Can we hunt them?"

"Not during the summer. I understand that, in case they are injuring anything on the farm, a license can be secured to kill one, but only one. But you can kill a wolf at any time, either summer or winter. Can you use a rifle or shotgun?" Mr. Sherwood asked of Charlie.

"No, sir, but if I went out in the woods I'd want somethin' to defend myself with, for I seen a bear nearly hug a fellow to death in a circus."

"Perhaps it was larger than the north Michigan bear."

"You say we'll see wolves? I read about a pack of wolves that chased a feller up on a house. And they were just climbin' after 'im when he played his fiddle, and they stood around listenin' 'till mornin,' and then some folks came and fixed 'em."

"Yes, yes, I remember the story in a reader; but I don't think I'd like to depend on a fiddle for these wolves. The fiddle is all right for a story-book, but I prefer a rifle or a quick repeater. I'll show you how to use both."

Then there was a talk about wolves and deer. The latter were described as numerous and very tame in the summer months. In fact, it was no unusual thing for a young deer to jump over into a farmer's garden and eat his young vegetables in summer. But trout fishing and canoeing were described as the best part of the coming vacation trip.

The boys in front were rehearsing episodes of the past school year, and Ferdinand Eggert was

giving a rather complicated account of the new wireless which he had brought.

About ten o'clock Mr. Sherwood went to his berth in the sleeper, leaving the boys to rest as best they could in the coach.

When he returned the following morning to take the boys to breakfast he found the car in commotion, for a lady claimed that one of them had stolen a watch and about twenty dollars from her hand-bag. She had no proof except one of them had passed her chair several times during the night; but she could not identify any one. Ferdinand Eggert was eliminated, as she remembered that the individual was not so tall.

The boys consented to allow the conductor to search them. Walter Stanley and John Newell each had a five-dollar bill in his pocketbook with smaller bills and some loose change. The lady claimed that she missed a five-dollar bill. But what proof was there that either boy had her money? The conductor declared each boy innocent. Carroll Cage had only a little change in silver, and Charlie Zip was penniless. No trace of the watch could be found.

The watch, as the lady claimed, was very valuable, besides it was a precious keepsake, as it had belonged to her son, Crawford Pfeffer, and had his initials engraved upon it. It was a watch of medium size and of Elgin make.

These facts were noted by the train officials, as also by Mr. Sherwood, who took the full name and address of Mrs. Pfeffer.

"Are you well acquainted with all these boys?" asked the conductor of Mr. Sherwood, whom he had called aside.

"I must confess they are almost strangers to me, with the exception of the youngster sitting there near the window," and he pointed to Walter Stanley. "He is my sister's son. Two of the boys are his school companions, one is a playmate, and one, who is to cook for us, is an entire stranger."

"How long will you be with them?"

"We have planned to spend three weeks in the woods."

"In that case you should discover the guilty party, if he is in your crowd; for boys of that age can not successfully conceal a theft for a

great while. I can rely on your doing your best to find the thief."

"You are not more anxious than I am."

"When you return to Chicago I would like to have you ring me up at the Northwestern depot," and the conductor gave his name and telephone number.

"With great pleasure."

"Although we are not responsible financially for any loss in the coach, still we consider it our duty to protect our patrons," explained the official. "I should like to be able to write to the lady after you return from your vacation, and to convince her that we had made every effort to recover her lost articles."

"You can rely on hearing from me."

It was now a few minutes after nine o'clock, and the train was drawing up at Keeseville, on the southeastern shore of Lake Superior. It was the center of several copper mines and had a large lighthouse and government wireless station.

Ferdinand was anxious to make the acquaintance of the operator, but the accommodation

train, which was to carry the party from Keeseville to Funda, eight miles away, was waiting in the station.

The Governor, who had little faith in the young scientist, promised to pay his way back to Keeseville in case he got his instruments in working condition.

Ferdinand readily consented to this offer and did not even ring up the station from the depot.

The camping outfit was transferred to the accommodation train, which was soon puffing out of the station toward Funda.

The railroad was cut through what seemed a boundless pine forest. It wound its tortuous way along hills and deep ravines and over beds of huge rough boulders.

Although it was the first week of July, the scant vegetation gave the few clearings the appearance of early spring. A single night's ride had brought the visitors into a new world. Vegetables could be raised, but the summers were too short to give grain a chance to reach maturity; besides, the soil seemed poor and rocky.

At Funda, Farmer Riggs met the party with

his wagon. On it was loaded the camp outfit, while Mr. Sherwood, the boys, and the dog found place among the baggage.

The road along which they drove was little more than a trail through the thick pines.

Good-bye to the heat, and dust, and crowds, and noise of the city! Good-bye to books and tasks! Here was freedom—glorious freedom in the great pine forests of upper Michigan!

CHAPTER VI

The Camp

I COULD tell you of the great, unbroken pine forest; of trees so close and branches so thick that the bright sunlight filters but feebly through the green and knitted canopy; of giant trees, old and gnarled, and spectre-like guardians of the woods for centuries. Yes, but I can not make you feel what I felt as I stood in the twilight gloom of this pine forest; stood there at mid-day, when I knew the sun was burning bright overhead, and yet could find no entrance to the lonely path which I trod. I stood with bared head, as if I were a part of creation's first days, and could almost hear the words of God calling the universe into being. Into this weird and somber woods our young friends were penetrating.

Farmer Riggs had chosen an ideal place for a camp—a dry and level bank some ten feet above

the water of Copper River. It was a noted trout stream and got its name from the fact that the stones at the bottom of the river were of a peculiar reddish color; and, in fact, a copper mine was operated at a place where the river emptied into Lake Superior, five miles distant. Although the iron in the water reddened the stones at the bottom, it was a perpetual fountain of the purest liquid. It was not wide, however, for a good caster could throw his bait to the opposite shore.

The farmer stopped his large wagon at the top of the hill, for only a narrow trail led down the steep bank to the camping place.

"These boys have come out for work and exercise," said Charles Sherwood as he paid the driver. "We'll let them carry everything to the camp."

"It is about dinner time," suggested Walter, "and we wouldn't mind having something to eat before beginning work."

"You can see how much work I am going to get out of this crowd," remarked Sherwood to Farmer Riggs.

"This pine forest do give a big appetite, sir."

"You are right; I am hungry myself, and I am sure you are. Sit right down with the boys and myself and have a lunch."

The farmer needed no further invitation. Boxes and cans were opened, a coffee-pot was soon hanging over a blaze, a frying-pan was odorous with fresh steaks, and tinware was scattered on the grass.

Only one of the crowd seemed indifferent to the meal. It was Ferdinand Eggert, who had walked off a short distance, and now returned with the best of news. "It's all right," he said; "it couldn't be better."

"What? What couldn't be better?" one or two of the crowd wanted to know.

"Why, the Chicago Telephone Company couldn't do it better."

"Let us hear what it is," put in Mr. Sherwood.

"Strong, too! I climbed one," went on young Eggert. "I could send one fifty miles, or even a hundred, and we aren't twenty from Keeseville."

"Oh, he's talking about the wireless already," moaned Carroll Cage.

"Of course! What else do you want me to talk about?"

"You had better talk about your dinner, or rather you had better sit down here on the grass and eat something, for there's a day's work to be done, with only half a day to do it in," remonstrated Mr. Sherwood.

As Ferdinand munched at his bread and meat he described the two pine trees at least a hundred and twenty feet apart. The tops were blasted and unencumbered, making just the place to string his wires. As soon as the instruments were ready the farmer promised to drive him to Funda, from which he could take a train to the wireless station at Keeseville.

Charlie Zip proved to be a good cook. He went at things not only with a will, but, considering that he was working under disadvantages, prepared the warm lunch in a remarkably short time. The boys were too interested to notice this, and took it as a matter of fact; but Charles Sherwood was not slow to discover that the new cook would be a real treasure for the party.

Farmer Riggs was glad to see that there were so many rifles and sporting guns in the crowd, for a bear had been making away with his young pigs. He could point out the exact spot where one of them had been devoured. If the boys only had the patience to wait at a place of vantage, they certainly would get a shot. He promised to call on the third day, for Mr. Sherwood thought it would require two days to get the camp ready.

"Now, boys, for work," cried out the Governor as the farmer left the crowd.

"I thought that we came on a vacation," yawned Walter as he stretched himself on the grass.

"Vacation is only a change of work," explained the uncle.

"We are ready," shouted John Newell and Carroll Cage.

"We'll be easy on you," smiled the man, turning to Carroll and measuring his slender form with his eye. "You can eat and sleep."

"I am as strong as that skinny-legs," replied Carroll, pointing toward Walter.

"We'll show them that we can carry the canoe," contended the latter.

Up went the light canoe on the shoulders of the two little lads. It was just a trifle heavy, but, singing as they went, they carried it down the narrow trail.

Several trips were made that afternoon—back and forth, up and down the trail, until the entire equipment was safely deposited on the site chosen for the camp. It was decided not to erect the tents for the first night, as the weather was warm and there was no danger of rain. In fact, even had it rained, the thick branches would have been a sufficient protection.

Charlie Zip was soon at work preparing for supper. A former camping party had made a fireplace of concrete and stone, using the cover of an old stove. It was ideal in every respect and was large enough to cook for a party twice the size of the present one.

"Where did you learn to cook?" asked John Newell.

"Don't ask too many questions," interrupted the Governor, who had not only kept secret the

history of the boy's past, but had cautioned him against revealing anything that would ruin his good name with the other boys.

"I had to work all my life," said Charlie. Then, turning to Mr. Sherwood, he continued: "These school fellers don't know what it is to work, and what it is to be alone in the world."

"I didn't mean any harm," explained John.

"No," took up the Governor, "we want Charlie to feel that he is one of the party—he is one of us—that's what I told you in the beginning, wasn't it, Charlie?"

"Yes, sir, but I am paid for the work; and I'll do my best for all."

"And you can rely on our helping you out," said John, who saw that his inquisitive question had slightly disconcerted both the boy and the man.

"I can show you a few things about cookin'," claimed the boy as he turned from the rustic stove. "Who knows but what you might need it some day; there's no tellin' what may happen to a feller."

"I may have to work, but I'll never have to

cook my meals except on a picnic," expostulated young Newell.

"Well, I hope not, partner! I wish you all kinds of good luck—but I's only sayin' it's always good to get ready for most everything."

"If I'm ever hard up, can't I find other work to do?" John wanted to know.

"Can you? Can you?" asked the young cook, still busy with his stove. "Can you always pick your own job? Can you? Can you?"

Mr. Sherwood was pleased to see the serious nature of the conversation of the two boys. It was just such a talk that John Newell needed, and, coming from another boy and one of his own age, it had all the more effect.

"Cooking came in handy for me when I was fishing red snappers," said the Governor. "We were out in the Gulf of Mexico in a fishing-smack. As the cook took too much to drink, we had to send him back to Mobile on a passing schooner, and I did the cooking. I had learned the trick on just such occasions as we have right here. But this time I wanted to spend most of my time trout fishing; therefore, I got my young

friend to help out with the cooking. Speaking of this fishing trip to the Gulf of Mexico, we had with us a man whom I'll never forget—Captain Walsh, of the fishing-smack. Well, he took his turn at everything, made himself happy by working for us all—he would fish or cut bait, cook or sing, and on the home trip he entertained the crowd by dancing the Mobile Grind."

"The Mobile Grind? That's a new dance on me," interposed John Newell.

"It is one of those old plantation dances of the southern negroes," explained the Governor. "It reminded me of what I read about the Indians' snake-dances."

John Newell seemed to have taken the hints or advice given him, for he picked up an axe and began cutting wood for the cook. Mr. Sherwood was equally industrious, driving stakes into the ground and nails into the closest trees, on which to hang the cooking utensils.

Long before darkness the bank of the little stream began to assume the aspects of a camp.

The wireless man had chosen a place for his

receiver and was busy making a rough box to protect his delicate instruments.

Walter and Carroll could not resist the temptation to try their luck at trout fishing, even if the Governor had issued orders that the first two days were to be devoted to work. Up from the stream came a cry of joy as young Cage lifted a fine trout from the stream. But his shout of triumph was soon changed to one of disappointment as the prize dropped from the line.

It was too dark to fish any more that evening. Besides, the crackling fire and the savory smell called the boys to camp.

It was agreed that all were to help the cook after supper; and this was to be a part of the regular program.

A short dip in the cool water of Copper River, and the party gathered around the welcome blaze. Then evening prayers were said, and sleep and silence stole over the camp.

Only the music of the waters was heard below, while angels played the great, great organ of Nature among the pines overhead.

CHAPTER VII

Every One His Own Way

MR. CHARLES SHERWOOD lined up the boys on the following morning and began to give instructions for the day's work; but before he could finish with his directions there was a good-natured riot. Why should they be put to work as if school were still in process? Office hours should be left in Chicago and not transported to the pine forests of upper Michigan. Walter wanted to try the new canoe. Gee! Hadn't he worked hard enough yesterday in lugging the canoe for a quarter of a mile? Carroll couldn't rest until he had recaptured that speckled trout. Ferdinand Eggert was sure the world would rush to utter destruction unless he had his wireless in operation before night. Then he needed two to assist him in stringing the wires —couldn't John Newell and Charlie Zip come with him?

"Well," said the Governor, looking down at the dog, "what are you going to do? Can you help me to make the camp and do the cooking?"

Then the Governor gave in to the universal demand, and told each one to do what he wished, and as long as he wished—after all, vacation was vacation, and all the rest of the year could have its order and its grind.

Charlie Zip did not look on this general favor as applying to himself. "De most important thing around a camp is de cookin'," he said. "Instead of me helpin' Ferd wid de wireless, he might help de cook."

"After the wires are strung and all is in operation," agreed the young scientist.

"I don't mind workin' wid de thing," replied Charlie. "I don't see how de thing is goin' to bring messages with nothin' to carry 'em."

"But there is something to carry the messages," argued Ferd. "The ether does it; you can't see the ether, but it carries the electric wave just as well as a wire can do it."

"Well, I see this new-fangled thing has to go up," interposed the Governor, and turning to

young Eggert he continued, "take both boys with you, take all four—and take the dog. I will be the cook to-day."

"He won't take me till I try the canoe," objected Walter.

"I'll go after I've caught that trout," said Carroll.

"You are both too small, and you couldn't climb the pine trees," answered the long-legged scientist.

"Why, you can reach to the top," retorted Walter.

"Off with you! Off with the whole crowd!" cried the Governor.

The lads waited for no second invitation. Carroll was soon digging bait, Walter was looking for the canoe paddles, and the scientist was displaying on the ground before his astonished assistants all the various parts of a wireless outfit.

"I knew it," muttered Charles Sherwood as he sat smoking his pipe before entering upon his day's work as cook. "I just knew I'd do the cooking. Well, what's the use of camping if one has all the conveniences of home—boys are boys!

Let 'em have their fun; they'll be old soon enough."

Up from the river came a cry and a call for help, for the canoe had capsized, throwing Walter into the stream beyond his depth. Although a fairly good swimmer, he was so encumbered with his clothes and taken so completely by surprise, that he was in real danger.

Carroll, who was closest to the scene, ran at once and leaped for the canoe, which was drifting some feet from the shore. He balanced himself for a moment, but fell into the water close to Walter, while the light craft with the impulse given it shot away from the two boys toward the middle of the stream.

The lads struggled for a minute then grasped each other tightly. They did not hear the warnings to separate and swim ashore, nor did they realize that a few strokes would have brought them to shallow water.

Ferdinand, with the other two boys, was soon on the bank. A glance showed the former that the water was not over his head. One plunge brought him to Walter and Carroll, where he

gained his footing and found that the water just reached his shoulders.

"Let loose, you little fools!" he shouted as he grasped each by the collar.

Then there was a struggle, and all three went under; for the rescuer had slipped on the smooth rock bottom of the river.

When they arose Mr. Sherwood was out in the water. With the palm of his hand he dealt a blow upon the head of Walter Stanley, who chanced to be nearest to him. Stunned for a second the boy relaxed his hold upon his companion.

"Pull Carroll away!" he shouted to Ferdinand.

"I can't!"

"Knock his head off!"

Carroll may have heard the threat in his half-conscious state. At any rate he relaxed his grip upon his drowning companion, but threw his arms around the neck of the taller boy who had saved him.

The boys had swallowed but little water, but they were pale and trembling. Carried to the bank they sat speechless and motionless. Near

them were Mr. Sherwood and their three companions; but they, too, were silent. All realized how a trifling incident might have resulted in a loss of life.

Charles Sherwood suddenly got the idea of distracting the crowd by giving a formal lecture with practical demonstrations on the way of getting into a canoe.

"Here, boys," said he, "this whole trouble came from not knowing how to handle a canoe. A canoe is not a dangerous thing, but you must know how to get into it, and what to do when you have taken your seat. The biggest trick is to know how to get into a canoe. You mustn't do as Walter did. That is, you mustn't leave one end of the canoe on the bank. Why? Because with one end on the shore a canoe acts like a swivel and the least weight at the other end will tilt it to one side."

"Come down here, one of you boys; come on, John," he continued, turning to young Newell.

"Do you want me to get drowned?"

"I want to show you how to keep from drowning."

"Will you wade out to get me?" laughed the youngster.

"That won't be needed. The canoe will hold three of your size; only you must know how to handle it."

"All right, Mr. Sherwood. I'm your scholar."

"You boys watch and I will show you how easy it is to capsize a canoe when one end is resting on the bank."

"Hey!" protested young Newell, "I thought you were to show us how to keep out of the water, and now you say you want to show how easy it is to fall into it."

"No danger, I will be right there to catch the canoe."

"Say, Mr. Sherwood, I think this is a trick. You are wet and you want to get the laugh on me. What do you think, Charlie?" he asked, turning to the cook.

"I'm willin' to try it," came the reply.

"I'll try, since he asked me first," young Newell asserted.

Then all realized for the first time that the canoe was not in sight. John Newell and Charlie

Zip offered to run down the stream and capture it. Away they went and overtook it just as it was approaching a shallow riffle where the current was quite strong. If the boys waited to undress, the canoe would be far down the stream.

"Let us rush out as we are," suggested John.

"Yes, de others is wet, and we may 's well git a little soakin'."

As the water was deeper than it appeared the boys got more than a little soaking. In fact, they could scarcely keep their footing as the canoe came gliding toward them in the swift current; and as they bent to drag the runaway craft ashore they were completely drenched. They secured it to the bank, and returned to camp dripping, much to the amusement of all those who were waiting for them.

"You little rascal," said Ferdinand Eggert as he picked up Dover. "You are the only dry member of the party and you've got to get a ducking."

With these words he cast the dog over the bank into the river.

Then all laughed as Dover swam ashore.

The whole camp now took on the appearance of wash-day, as the wet clothes were strung out on branches and bushes.

It was agreed that the party had enough of the water for one day and that Mr. Sherwood could defer his lessons to some other time. This arrangement fell in with Ferdinand's plans, as all would now be free to help in the construction of the wireless. But little could be done that day, as most of the time was spent in erecting the two tents. One of these was to be used for the kitchen, the other for sleeping quarters.

Toward evening a man came up the river. He was a mysterious individual, low of stature, dark featured, and with a heavy mustache. He looked over the camp and at each of the party without saying a word or asking a question.

When Mr. Sherwood asked him why he had visited them he simply replied that he was passing up the river. He accepted, however, an invitation to take supper with the crowd. He gave no information about himself, but, after going into each tent, slipped away as quietly as he had come.

That night John Newell came to the Governor and whispered that some one had taken his five-dollar bill.

"That is strange," said Mr. Sherwood, "the lady in the car lost five dollars and now you lose the same amount. Keep the matter quiet—say nothing to any one—let me think it over."

A few minutes later he called his nephew. "Walter," he asked, "where have you got your money?"

"In the valise."

"Go over there quietly, and see whether it is there."

The boy returned in a few minutes. He was excited. Not a cent could he find in his valise.

"Say nothing about it for the present," were the words of the uncle.

A few minutes later Charles Sherwood turned and looked at Charlie Zip who was busy in front of the stove, with the full red flare in his face.

"I wonder whether I have made a mistake?" mused the man. He looked again and then turned away. "That boy has an honest face," he thought, "and I like him more every day."

CHAPTER VIII

The First Message

"IT IS all right," said Mr. Sherwood, "and I take off my hat to you." With these words he bowed low to the scientist. The boys gathered around Ferdinand Eggert, and in imitation of the Governor made the same bow with much solemnity.

In fact, young Eggert had proved himself worthy of the congratulations, for there above him from pine to pine were stretched the six wires, taut and steady. Not a nail had been driven into the trees. Stretching the wires seemed so very simple after the work was finished.

It was eleven o'clock of the second day of camping. On the previous afternoon Ferdinand Eggert had cut and trimmed two pieces of wood six feet long and the thickness of a scantling. To each of these he had fastened six glass insulators a foot apart. On the level bank of the

river the wooden supports were placed a hundred feet from each other, and light aluminum wires were stretched from the insulators. Strong and heavy wires about twelve feet in length were fastened to each end of the wood and stretched out in the form of a V.

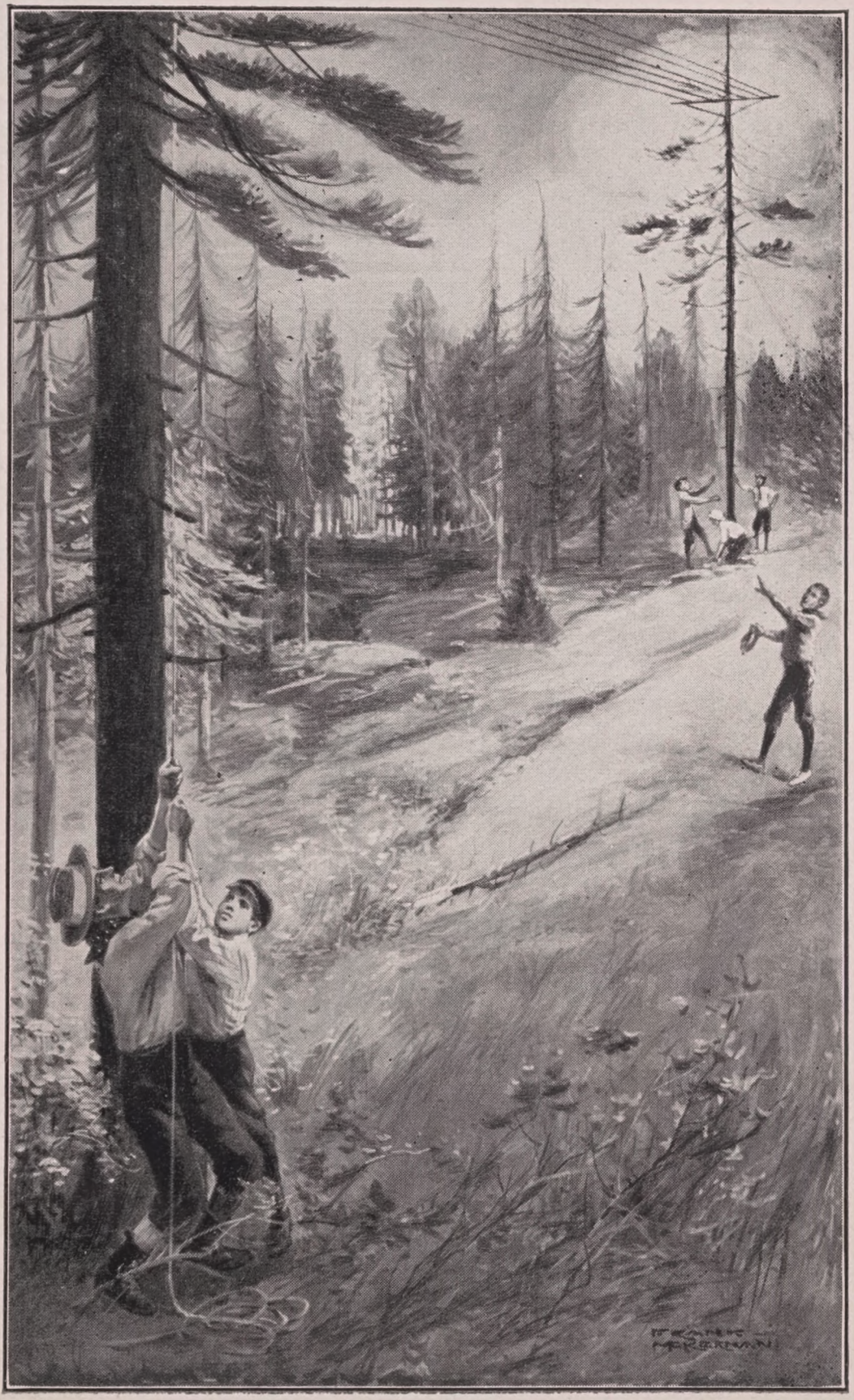
This much of the wireless outfit could easily be carried along the narrow path to the top of the hill.

All the members of the party went to take part in raising the wires, although no one, not even Mr. Sherwood, had the slightest idea of the scientist's plans.

"It is just half an hour's work," said Ferdinand as they paused beneath one of the trees. As no one contradicted him or even replied, he began at once to give directions to Charlie Zip, who was just then nearest him. "Bring the wires over here, so as to keep away from the branches of the tree."

"You're de boss," replied Charlie, as he obeyed orders.

"A little further—there—there. We will not touch a branch."



"PULL—ONE, TWO, THREE!"—PAGE 82.

"Put it down here?" Charlie wanted to know.

"Just the place," and Ferdinand took a second look to see whether they would be clear of all obstruction.

"Who is the best climber here?" the scientist wanted to know, as he took from his pocket a ball of twine to which he had already tied a small stone.

"Your uncle used to be when he was young," put in Mr. Sherwood.

"I would like to have some one whom I can boss," replied young Eggert, "but if you will wait we'll need your strength and weight to stretch the wire."

"Then I'll sit here and watch."

John Newell thought he would have no difficulty in climbing the pine, so he put the twine in his pocket and began to mount the tree. It was not a difficult task, as the branches reached close to the ground.

"Keep going; just as high as you can!" shouted Ferdinand from below.

Up and up went the boy. Then he yelled

back: "There's only one big limb above me; and it's mighty high up here."

"Take a good hold and let one end of the twine come down."

Soon the little stone came creeping through the branches to the ground.

Unfastening the stone and attaching the end of a strong rope to the twine the scientist gave orders to John to pull.

The rope, thus drawn up, was thrown over this upper limb. "Right down and pull the rope after you," shouted Eggert. One end of the rope was now attached to the heavy V-shaped wire, while two of the boys were asked to pull the other end slowly. In the meanwhile two other boys kept the six wires free from the branches.

The same process was repeated with the next pine. The wireless outfit swung between the two trees and clear of all branches.

One of the ropes was fastened to a lower limb, then all hands were needed to pull on the other rope so as to stretch the wires. Here Mr. Sherwood was asked to take a part.

"Pull—one, two, three! Now, again—one,

two, three! Again—one, two, three!" The heavy rope was rasping against the large limb over which it had been drawn, but there was little friction and since the process was slow there was no heat developed.

"Get off of my foot!" suddenly shouted John Newell to Charlie Zip.

"Pardon me," said the offender.

"I'll knock your head off!"

"Not if I knows it!" and young Zip broke his resolution not to use profane language.

"Here! Here!" cried the Governor. "None of that talk." Mr. Sherwood, who had noticed several remarks made by John Newell in reference to the cook, realized that a feeling of animosity was growing up between them. He had no time, however, to think over the matter, for the orders of the boy scientist came again. "Pull—one, two, three! Pull—one, two, three!"

"Hold it tight, until I go out and take a look at it," continued Ferdinand. "Boys, it's fine," he shouted, as he walked from tree to tree, "not a branch has caught, and the wires are almost straight the whole distance. But let us give a

last pull and get it just a trifle better. All hands pull—one, two, three! Pull—one, two, three! There!"

The rope was secured on the lower limb of the tree.

Only one thing remained. Two smaller wires which had been fastened at the lower end of the V's were now secured to pegs driven in the ground and held the pieces of wood perpendicular in the air.

The wires which led to the instrument were left dangling.

Then all came midway between the two trees, and here it was that Mr. Charles Sherwood removed his hat and with a profound bow saluted the boy genius—a salutation that was repeated by all the friends of Ferdinand Eggert.

The party now returned to camp for lunch, after which the work of bringing the lead wires down the hill and along the path was begun.

It was comparatively easy, as it was not necessary to keep the wires above reach, and the trees formed natural posts.

Long before dark Ferdinand was sitting at his

instrument ready to send or receive messages. For some minutes he waited, adjusting every delicate part. He wished to get a message before sending one. As everything seemed in working order, the scientist thought that he would pick up the first message within a radius of fifty, possibly a hundred miles.

But no message came. "Well, here goes our first message to the world. What shall it be?" he asked.

"S.O.S. Ship off shore," replied the Governor.

"Now, if I am arrested for sending such news it will be your fault," said Ferdinand. "But here it goes."

Twenty miles away at the government lighthouse and wireless station at Keeseville, the operator was nodding in his chair. Suddenly his instrument clicked and his trained ear caught the call for help: "S. O. S. Ship off Shore."

"Where?" he flashed back.

"Northeast, southwest of nowhere."

"Don't you know that you can be fined five hundred dollars for sending out false alarms?" the operator asked.

"But you can't catch me."

"We'll see."

"Say, I beg your pardon!" was the answer sent back by Ferdinand, for he realized that he had made a mistake, and that the government regulations and fine were strictly enforced. "We just set up this new instrument and that S. O. S. was the first thing that came to my mind. Don't report me, I want to be your friend."

"Where are you?" came the inquiry.

"On Copper River, twelve miles from Funda."

"At Riggs' camp?"

"Yes."

"Who are you?"

"A camping party of five from Chicago."

"Are you a regular operator on your vacation?" For the boy was so rapid in his work that he was judged a professional.

"No, only an academy boy."

"How is the trout fishing?" the government man wanted to know.

"We have not tried yet."

"If I come to your camp will you take me fishing?"

"Sure, sure, come right on any day, stay a day or stay a week."

"Thanks, you may expect me on Sunday. Good-bye!"

"Good-bye!" signaled Ferdinand. "I am glad that fellow wasn't a crank. If he had sent in my name to the government there'd have been trouble," said the boy to his companions.

"Why didn't you ask him for the baseball score?" put in Walter Stanley.

"Let us see whether he has a paper," and with this remark the scientist turned on the current.

Communication was again established and soon the results of the games for the last two days were pinned against a tree. The government operator in his lonesome station seemed only too glad to find some one with whom to communicate, and was most willing to send news at any time. On the following morning and on each of the succeeding days he was the first to ring up and communicate the news.

After supper Farmer Riggs came to the camp with the announcement that a bear was again after his hogs. Did the boys want some real

sport? Here was a chance to kill big game. Mr. Sherwood was most anxious to go, but felt it his duty to stay at the camp. With his permission, Ferdinand Eggert and John Newell went back with the farmer to try their luck.

CHAPTER IX

Young Hunters

WHEN the two boys had departed with Farmer Riggs, Charles Sherwood sent the rest of the party down the river to bathe and canoe. He himself had remained behind, for he felt it his duty to make a thorough examination of the camp to find, if possible, some traces of the stolen money. He succeeded in opening every valise, emptied and searched every box, felt into the pockets of all the clothes, but found nothing. He did not believe that the visitor had stolen anything, for although the latter had gone into the tents, he scarcely had time to pilfer. Here, then, was a cause for anxiety; there was a thief in the party.

In the meantime the young hunters had reached the home of Farmer Riggs. It was only as they came near the house that they discovered Dover trotting quietly behind them. Dover was entirely too small to hunt bears, but was large

enough to frighten them away. To prevent his going astray or frightening the game he was locked up in the barn for the night.

The farmer took the boys out in the pasture and showed them the pen where the bear had made the raid.

"Are you sure it was a bear?" Ferdinand wanted to know.

"I'll show you his tracks down near the fence," and he explained the difference between the tracks of a bear and a wolf.

Some two hundred feet away, where the fence had been broken, Farmer Riggs pointed out the tracks of the thief. A few minutes' walk brought them into the thick woods where a part of a pig was seen lying on the ground.

"The bear will be back after that part either to-night or to-morrow night. If he had a real good meal he may wait until to-morrow night, otherwise you can expect him right here before midnight. Both wolves and bears always come back to finish up anything they've left behind."

"Well, he won't finish us up, too," said John Newell.

"I'll put you where he can't get at you. Let us find out the direction of the wind," he continued, as he lit a match and lighted some dry leaves.

As the wind came from the east, a position was selected about forty feet west of the carcass.

Farmer Riggs now showed the boys a trick in woodcraft. With a hand axe he cut a number of saplings eight feet in length. Then, with pieces of rope he tied these saplings to small trees; and on top of them secured other branches, making a platform ten feet from the ground.

The boys stood in admiration of the work, the rapidity with which it was done, and the strength of the structure. Here they could spend the night, free from all danger of attack.

Moreover, a clearing was made between the platform and the pig's carcass to give the young hunters a view of the game. They were assured that even in the night they would be able to see the outline of the bear if it came to devour the rest of its prey.

Toward dusk the farmer left the two boys.

They ate a light lunch, which they had brought, then settled down for the long night's watch.

Their quiet vigil, however, was soon disturbed. Far away in the woods was heard the call of some wild animal. Was it a bear or a wolf? The boys did not know. But it was an unfriendly voice; it seemed to challenge their right to remain where they were; it seemed to cry for help; it seemed to summon others from the still deeper recesses of the forest. It was a sound that suited the night; a sound that came forth from the world of darkness. It was not loud, and although sharp it was plaintive.

Soon there was a similar sound—a distant reply. Then the voices were closer, and a third was heard. Soon the woods seemed full of the voices; they were sadder now and more plaintive.

"A pack of wolves!" muttered John Newell.

"I'm glad we're on this platform," whispered Ferdinand Eggert.

"Let us fire our guns to frighten 'em away," suggested John.

"No! You might scare the bear; the wolves can't hurt us."

"Are you sure? I read a story of Dick Onslow, and the wolves stuck their heads right into the tent."

"Yes, but this isn't a tent; they'll have to climb a tree to get us."

"Perhaps they can leap up."

"If it gets dangerous," exclaimed Ferdinand, "then it'll be time to fire."

With their guns ready for action the boys sat and waited. The sounds of the voices came closer and closer. Sometimes they resembled a moan; again a sharp cry came from the woods.

"Look!" said Ferdinand, grasping the arm of his companion, "I see two bright eyes moving there below us."

"Shoot!" directed John.

"No! Let us wait until the pack comes up; perhaps each of us can kill a wolf."

"That'll bring us five dollars each," came the subdued answer.

"I don't feel scared," mumbled young Eggert, "still my hand is trembling. I can't see the bright eyes any more," he continued, "but I hear more coming."

Barking and growling could now be distinctly heard; but it was very difficult to catch the outlines of the figures moving among the pines.

"They must be near the pig," whispered Ferdinand, "let us both shoot in that direction." Just as they were preparing to fire, a flash lit up the woods near the fence, followed by the report of a gun.

"Halloo, boys!" came the voice of Farmer Riggs, "don't you hear them foxes?"

"We thought they were wolves," answered John Newell.

"No, they're foxes. I forgot to tell you that foxes often followed in the trail of wolves and bears, and eat any meat left behind. They evidently scented the young pig."

The boys were assured that the little pests would not return again. The farmer went back to his house, and the watch for the bear was resumed.

Hour after hour passed by, until wearied by the long vigil both young hunters fell asleep. When they awoke, the cedar-birds were singing

overhead. There before them was the carcass of the pig untouched.

That same night Mr. Charles Sherwood had been awakened by a noise in the kitchen tent. Pans and dishes, buckets and pails, were being thrown around recklessly. At first he thought it was early morning and that Charlie Zip had begun to prepare for breakfast. But there was the cook fast asleep.

Rifle in hand the Governor crept out of his tent. Then he saw a dark object pushing aside the curtains of the kitchen tent.

"Halt, there!" cried the Governor, bringing his rifle to his shoulder.

But the object moved on until, with its figure silhouetted upon the water, it was easily recognized as a bear.

"Crack!" went the repeating rifle, and the bear rolled over. The Governor waited ready for another shot, but as the animal did not move he went for a lantern. An examination proved that the bear had been shot through the heart.

We may well imagine the surprise of the two young hunters when they returned to the camp

tired and sleepy after the night's watching. Hanging on the branch of a tree was the prize which the Governor had killed.

"Halloo, boys!" he cried, "where is your bear?"

"We sent him down here to you," replied Ferdinand. "We gave up bear hunting and went after foxes."

"You mean they went after us," John Newell blurted out.

Then each party rehearsed the experiences of the night.

"You are the cause of this mix-up," said Ferdinand, turning to Dover. "If you had stayed at home, where you belonged, the bear would have been frightened away to us." But Dover only walked over to the kitchen to get his breakfast, as if well contented with the night's experience.

"Well, boys," asserted the Governor, "we are sure now that the bear is dead; had it gone where you were hiding, it might now be free and ready to eat more young pigs. So Dover did a wise thing."

"If the bear had made as much noise as those foxes," replied John Newell, "we'd have been too excited to shoot straight."

Just then the wireless ticked, and the operator gave the boys the results of the ball games in Chicago on the previous day.

"Do you want to buy a bear?" Ferdinand signalled.

"How large is it?"

"About seven feet high," came the response, after Ferdinand had taken a glance at the bear as it dangled from the tree branch.

"That's a fish story, and not a bear story."

"Just wait a moment," for Mr. Sherwood had gone over to get the exact measurements. "Four feet and nine inches," was the reply.

"There's not a bear that large in Michigan."

As Ferdinand insisted that the measurement was correct, the operator instructed him to skin the animal carefully and put the hide in strong salt water. He himself would come over in a few days and judge whether the hide had any marketable value.

CHAPTER X

The Trout Stream

ALTHOUGH Charles Sherwood had come to Copper River to enjoy trout fishing he had not as yet found time to begin the sport. He had on former vacations landed many a black bass and pickerel when fishing in the lakes of Wisconsin; but trout fishing was known to him only by information gathered from magazines and stories. He had consulted expert fishermen and had provided himself with the latest and best outfit for casting. Moreover, he had been practising casting in the river in front of the camp, although he knew that all trout had been frightened far away.

"This is my day for trout fishing," said he to the boys at breakfast. "I'm going to take only one companion—he must be a boy who talks but little and who makes no noise."

John Newell disappeared under the table;

Walter Stanley claimed that he had not broken the rule of silence during the whole year at school. Ferdinand Eggert offered to write home and get a ribbon, which had been awarded to him for a perfect observance of silence. Carroll Cage, smiling with that smile which had won him a vacation, just looked at the Governor and smiled.

"Carroll and myself will go trout fishing," said Mr. Sherwood. "I think he can keep silence, and that smile will not frighten any trout."

"Take two of us," pleaded Walter.

"Never," asserted the Governor, "not only would you frighten away the fish, but we'd be in each other's way—lines would get tangled and so forth and so on."

"I'll let Walter go," said Carroll.

"Walter has nothing to say about the matter," replied the Governor. "I have picked you and there the matter ends."

"But I never caught a fish in my life."

"So much the more fun to catch your first fish to-day."

Preparations were soon finished, and Charles

Sherwood and his youthful companion were off for the day's sport. "I wish these trout were just a little larger," said the man as they strolled down the narrow path. "Of course they are game fish, and fight for all they are worth; but they can't make the same fight that a black bass or a pickerel can. When you have a four pound bass at the end of your line you know he is there; and when you hook an eight or ten pound pickerel you may have to tug a long time before you are sure of your prize. But these river trout weigh only about a pound, even the largest. However, it is considered game sport, and I've come to try it."

Creeping cautiously toward a pool, Mr. Sherwood prepared to make his first cast.

"Where is your cork?" asked the boy, who had seen a picture of two boys fishing in a small stream.

"You don't need a cork, for if there are any trout around they'll leap for your fly as soon as it touches the water."

"I'll watch you for a while," said Carroll, posting himself where he could get a good view.

"There!" cried the Governor, "they have seen you and that has frightened them all away."

"So you can't talk and can't be seen," the boy remarked as he climbed back from the place.

"No, not when trout fishing."

"Gee! I don't see any fun in it then!"

"You wait until they begin to bite, and you'll forget about talking," explained the Governor.

"I knew a boy who always talked during class, and kept silence during recess," whispered the boy.

"Just keep one eye over the bank," said Mr. Sherwood, scarcely noticing the remark, "we'll soon see whether you have frightened the fish away."

As the cast struck the water a speckled trout leaped for it; and before Walter had taken his position to observe the fisherman, the latter had landed his first prize.

The boy was about to rush toward the fish, but was warned to keep his place. Soon a second, and a third were added to the catch. Then for half an hour the man cast but got no bite.

"Let us try another pool," suggested Mr. Sherwood.

The man and boy now experienced that variety and zest that is characteristic of trout fishing. They were compelled at times to crawl down into deep ravines from which the daylight was all but excluded; they crossed a gully on a fallen tree; they worked their way through thick bushes; and were forced by rough boulders to turn a hundred feet or more from the stream. Carroll tarried at times to gather some delicate ferns, or pluck thimble berries—red and tempting, and resembling raspberries of more southern markets.

"It's exciting to land a twelve pound red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico," mused Mr. Sherwood as he trudged along, "but one must sit idly waiting for the fish to come. There's real sport in catching bass in northern lakes; but here, too, one often rows along monotonously near the feeding-places of the fish. In trout fishing there's never a moment of rest, for no trout stream has a level bank along which one can wander. Fallen trees, thick brush, bogs, creeks,

precipices, and boulders—all these obstruct the way and make a day of sport one of constant exercise. Even when a trout pool is reached one must often crouch beneath branches, bend out over fallen trees, or take some other cramped position in order to cast. Then it requires quickness and dexterity to make a land and avoid entangling one's lines among the overhanging boughs."

Despite mishaps, and loss of flies and lines, Mr. Sherwood was more than lucky. Master Cage was touched with pity when he saw his first trout lying safely on the bank at his feet.

During the noon lunch, when Carroll wore an unusual smile of satisfaction, Mr. Sherwood approached the subject which he had in mind, when he had selected his day's companion.

"Carroll," said he, "how much money did you bring with you?"

"Just a little."

"Where do you keep it?"

"I must have lost it all," acknowledged the boy.

"And where was it?"

"In my pants pocket—the one I wore on the trip from Chicago, and left in the tent."

"When did you lose the money?"

"I don't know, sir, I felt for it the other day and it was gone."

"Perhaps the man who came to the camp took it," suggested the Governor.

"I don't know, sir."

"Why do you say that you lost it?"

"Well, it's gone, and I didn't think any one here would steal it."

"Let me ask you something, Carroll, do you like Charlie Zip?"

"Yes, sir."

"Do you think he would steal?"

"No, sir!" and the answer came so quick and true that it left no doubt in the mind of Mr. Sherwood.

"Neither do I," added the man. "He was a stranger when he came with us; but he has worked faithfully. I believe that he is a good boy and an honest boy."

One of the trout lying in the basket beside the boy leaped over the edge, "Poor little thing,"

muttered the boy pathetically, as he replaced the fish.

"I like to see boys tender-hearted, but fish don't suffer much," explained the man.

"How do you like John Newell?" he continued.

Carroll Cage did not answer.

Just then there was a rattling noise across the river. "Do you know the name of that bird?" asked the man, as he pointed toward a dead limb.

"No, sir."

"Well, he's no relation of yours, and I don't think he could keep the rules of silence very long. That's a kingfisher—the noisiest bird that I know. Still I like the bird; it's a real companion."

The kingfisher seemed to understand the compliment, for it screamed and called until its mate came up, and then the two sat talking to the friendly fisherman and boy across the stream. Or were they complaining that they could not get even one, of the basket full of fish, to feed the little family of kingfishers hid snugly away in the soft bank down the river?

"So you don't like John Newell," resumed the Governor.

"I don't know him very well," came the timid reply.

"Well, I'm glad that you haven't said anything against him," put in the Governor, as if guilty of leading the boy into detraction. "That's right, Carroll, never talk against any one. If you don't like a person, just keep away from him. But we have had a long rest and a good lunch. Let us try our luck again with the trout."

The fishermen met with various accidents that afternoon. Carroll fell from a log into a bog and had to be rescued by the Governor, who in turn slipped from a root into the river. But the sport went on despite these trifling mishaps. Moreover, Carroll Cage became not only friendly but talkative. He asked the names of flowers, and trees, and birds; wanted to know more about trout than his companion could answer, expressed his delight when either made a fine catch.

Finally the Governor turned to him and said in a good-natured way: "Carroll, it took me all the morning to start you talking; now I am

afraid that I'll not be able to stop you. You are just as bad as those two kingfishers—in fact, kingfisher should be your name;" and for the rest of the day silent and smiling Carroll Cage was called the "Kingfisher," a name that the other boys fastened permanently upon their companion.

CHAPTER XI

The Man From Down the River

JOHN NEWELL was a thief. He had stolen the watch and money from the woman in the train; he had stolen from his friend, Walter Stanley; he had stolen the little change that Carroll Cage had brought. When he reported to Mr. Sherwood that he himself had been robbed, it was simply a ruse to throw suspicion on Charlie Zip. But these were not the first thefts of which he was guilty.

John Newell felt uneasy. Every time that smiling Carroll Cage looked into his face he turned away as if the latter was reading the guilt in his breast. Finally, John began to avoid the crowd and go out into the woods alone. In fact, it was in the woods, beneath a flat rock, that he had concealed his hidden treasure. On the night when he had stolen the watch and money, he had managed to slip them into the grip containing

a part of the wireless outfit of Ferdinand Eggert, and had removed them during the hurry of changing cars at Keeseville.

More than a week had passed since the party came to Copper River, and John Newell continued to go alone into the woods and, miser-like, to lift the stone and examine his riches.

One day, while he was counting his money, he felt a hand upon his shoulder. "Don't get frightened," said a voice.

The boy turned and saw, bending over him, the man from down the river.

"I could have stolen that beautiful watch and the money," said the man.

"How did you know where they were?"

"I've been watching you for three days."

"Why?" asked the affrighted boy.

"Not to steal, for I could have done that the first day. But you stole that watch and money."

"I didn't."

"Keep cool," said the man; "I'm not going to hurt you or take anything from you. No boy would come out in this dark woods and hide such a beautiful watch unless he had stolen it."

"I didn't steal," snapped the boy. "But some one in that camp has been stealing, and I had to hide my things."

"I'll give you five dollars," said the man, "if you'll come with me and show that watch to the man in your camp."

"I won't; it's none of your business!" and John Newell emphasized his words with an oath.

"I'm a thief, too," asserted the man from down the river. "Listen, I've been stealing—stealing big things—heavy things; not your little watches and your five-dollar bills, but big things—heavy things—things worth thousands. I need some one to help me, some one whom I can trust. That's what I came to the camp for. I wanted to try out that fellow who is with you boys. But he looked too square, and I saw he wouldn't do. Then I saw you going out in the woods, and I watched you. When you left I came here and found the watch and money. I could've taken them, but I just waited to get a look at you, for you are a little young for the big thing that I need."

"What big thing?" asked John curiously

as he slipped the watch and money into his pocket.

"Oh, a very big thing," replied the man.

"What can I do? I am only a boy."

"Yes, but you have experience."

"In what?"

"In stealing."

"I tell you, sir—I didn't——"

"Don't lie, boy, don't lie. I've been stealing, but I never lied about it."

"I didn't steal."

"Then, come over and show the money and watch to the man at the camp."

"I won't."

"Of course you won't. It's stolen property."

"You just said that you stole."

"Yes, and I'm owning up to it. I am looking for another thief. It is an old saying that it takes one thief to catch another; but I believe it takes one thief to help another. Sit down and let me tell you a story—a real story—one that will open your eyes."

John's curiosity was aroused. In his heart he felt that his protests of innocence were weak,

and that the man knew his guilt. He submissively seated himself on the stone which he had used to cover his ill-gotten property.

"Listen! Four years ago I began stealing copper from the stamping-mill of the Copper River Mine. Once or twice a week I would take as much as I could carry and bring it into a rocky gully half a mile from the mill. I have thousands of pounds hid there. Then the theft was discovered, but no one knew how much had been taken. That was four years ago. Shippers and buyers were notified. Every bar of copper is stamped with the name of the mine, and it's impossible to sell it without being caught. That's why I had to keep the thing quiet for four years. I was under suspicion for a long time, and even when I went to a city I was afraid of being watched, so my copper has remained here. I don't like to trust this matter to a boy, but since you are in this stealing business you may as well make several hundred dollars. If I am ever going to sell this copper, it's time to do it now. Come, and I'll show you the treasure."

This time John had permitted the man to ac-

cuse him of stealing and had not protested. He sat unmoved, however, doubting what to do.

"Come, come!" repeated the man, as John hesitated.

"How far is it?" he wanted to know.

"Some distance from the river. We must start at once or it will be dark before we get back to the camp."

"I will go with you, if you wish," said the boy almost in a whisper.

"But first you must acknowledge that you stole the watch and money," insisted the man.

"Is that any of your business?" asked the boy with forced aggressiveness.

"Yes, it is my business. I have told you that I have robbed a copper mine. I am even going to show you the stolen copper. I am going to give you money for helping me. I want something against you, just as you have something against me. I want to know for my own protection. Thieves help each other, but they never trust each other. You stole——"

"I can't deny it any longer," acknowledged John dolefully.

"I knew it all the time," affirmed the stranger. "We are thieves and partners. Come, let us inspect our stolen wealth."

The two started off, John Newell bringing with him his watch and the money. The man gave his name as George Rivers. He had studied mining engineering at college and seemed well educated. He got from the boy the facts that he was most anxious to know, namely, that John Newell belonged to a representative family in Chicago. This was helpful to Rivers as a matter of protection. It would be necessary for him to trust his accomplice with the receipts of the entire amount of the sale. If young Newell belonged to a respectable family, the man could threaten exposure in case he did not get his part of the dividends.

John Newell all but lost his courage as he followed the man along the winding paths through the dark woods. Perhaps the man intended to murder him and take his watch and money, and only wanted to get him at a distance from the camp! His heart seemed suddenly to stop beating when a rain-crow darted out of the thick

foliage. But he could not turn back now, as he was in the power of the man.

After an hour's tramp George Rivers paused, threw aside a few logs, went further into the gully, lifted some rough boards and displayed to the astonished boy the treasure of copper. There it was—bar upon bar, thousands of pounds. It looked like rough gold, and was wondrously beautiful.

"We are partners," said the man; "you be my agent in Chicago, and I will see that the copper reaches the city."

As it was getting toward dusk, the man and boy started back to the camp, on the way the former giving his instructions to his young accomplice.

On returning to Chicago young Newell was to look up some factory where a large amount of copper was needed. He was to offer to deliver several thousand pounds within four months. In the meanwhile Rivers would bargain with a lumber boat to carry the treasure to the city. John Newell would hire a wagon; deliver the copper, and collect for it; he would send seventy-five per

cent. of the receipts to Rivers and keep twenty-five as a commission.

"I am going to be perfectly frank with you," explained the man as they walked along. "I have no way of binding you. It is possible for you to sell the copper and keep the entire amount. In that case, I'll have to expose your theft or turn upon your family. In doing so, I will also confess my guilt, but I will bring disgrace upon you and your people. From what you say, you can't afford to let this happen."

"I see it," acknowledged the young culprit, "but you already know that I have stolen, and can disgrace me at any time, if you wish."

"That I can. I would never have approached you on this matter if I had not found that you were already in the business."

As it grew dark, John Newell stumbled along after the man. Every tread of his foot seemed to awake an echo. The low, sad bark of a fox broke in upon the silence. Time and again he looked back to see whether any one was following them.

"There is the camp," said the man, pointing to a glow in the bushes.

"I didn't know we were so close," muttered the boy.

They shook hands and separated.

John Newell dashed through the dark woods! All around seemed unfamiliar! A deep gully was between him and the fire, and there were boulders and fallen logs, which forced him to change his direction. On reaching the top of the hill he paused, not knowing which way to go. He called aloud, hoping to bring back the man or to attract those at the camp. No answer came, but the echoes from the pines. Only one who has been lost in a woods at night can realize the feeling of bewilderment which came upon him. He called again in almost a wild cry of despair; but the echoes were so weird and ghostlike that he feared the reverberations of his own voice. He climbed upon a rock, saw only the dense trees and gathering darkness around him. Then he dashed madly into the woods; but the underbrush was so thick, and all was so strange that he turned and ran back to the hill

at the top of the gully. Here again he was confused, for he could not find the rock which he had mounted only a few minutes before. There before him was a pine-tree, with its branches reaching to the ground. Up he climbed, with his heart beating as if some huge, black monster were reaching with its claws to seize him.

In the meanwhile there was excitement in the camp. Guns were fired, and pine branches were kept burning. Mr. Sherwood forbade the boys to go far into the woods to search, for he knew how easy it was for them to get beyond hearing or the range of the camp-fire.

Two of the party went to ask Farmer Riggs whether young Newell had been to his house; and Ferdinand inquired of the operator at Keeseville, who in turn asked the ticket agent whether a boy had been seen in the depot at Funda. About midnight the Governor sent the boys to bed, while he himself piled fresh wood upon the fire. Toward morning he, too, went to his tent. Even if John Newell was lost, there was probably little danger. A party could certainly find him on the following day.

From the pine-tree John Newell thought he caught a glimpse of a fire. Yes, there it was! Only a faint glimmer, it is true, and it flickered at times and seemed to die out. But it was close, far closer than he had hoped.

Down to the ground he slipped, then cautiously, carefully, he crept toward the place. It was in full view now! Unable to restrain himself longer, he dashed through the bushes! There was a fire! Not the camp, indeed, but a few logs were burning! And, horror of horrors, near the unsteady blaze could be distinctly seen the form of a bear!

CHAPTER XII

When Wild Met Wild

THAT afternoon, while George Rivers and young John Newell were on their way to inspect the treasure of stolen copper, Walter and Ferdinand were fishing down the stream about half a mile from the camp. They made a fire to roast some young trout which they had caught, and it was still burning sufficiently bright at nightfall to deceive the man and boy, who mistook the blaze for the camp fire.

A young cub had been attracted by the light and was enjoying a repast of fishbones and pieces of bread when young Newell appeared on the scene. It was almost full grown, and in the uncertain shadows appeared to the boy to be much larger than it really was.

Of course, John Newell did not wait to inspect the bear closely. His first thought was to climb to a place of safety. From a fork in a small tree some ten feet from the ground he viewed the

black object below. To his surprise, the bear continued to snuffle around in search of bones, wholly unconscious of the presence of any one.

Soon another object attracted the boy's attention. Two eyes looked out from the thick brush. Then a wolf crept in sight; bending, poising—with one leap it was upon the cub. Its teeth sank deep into the back of the helpless creature, whose body rolled over on the ground.

With its front paws upon the body of its victim, it raised its head and gave a prolonged howl that sent the echoes ringing among the dark pines.

Then it paused. It tore the flesh of the young bear and repeated its wild call.

From out of the world of darkness came an answer. Louder and closer was heard a voice in reply. Through the forest dashed a wolf in response to the call, which it so well understood.

In the meanwhile old mother bear had missed the little truant and had set off to find it. Just as the two wolves had begun to feast upon their prey, in upon them rushed the maddened mother.

Snarling and gnashing their bloody teeth, the

wolves leaped into the brush, only to dash out again at the enraged bear.

Almost stupefied with terror, the boy watched the prolonged battle. The fire died out, and all around was in darkness. But the bright, flaring eyes of the wolves could be plainly seen. Sometimes singly, sometimes the pair, rushed to the attack only to be beaten back. Once the bear seized a wolf, but it broke away and went whining through the woods.

Then there followed intervals of quiet; only the sniffle of the bear could be heard, as if moaning over the death of its young.

Eyes like burning coals were again seen, but the bear was equal to the combined attack. Hours passed with intervals of battle and truce. Once John Newell heard the breaking of twigs just beneath him and feared that the bear was coming to climb the tree; but it was only a wolf approaching to renew the combat.

As it was too dark for the boy to see the hands of his watch, he had no idea of the time. Once or twice he dozed only to start with a shudder and grasp more tightly the branch overhead.

"ALMOST STUPEFIED WITH TERROR, THE BOY WATCHED THE PROLONGED BATTLE."—PAGE 122.

Suddenly he was conscious of birds chirping among the branches, and the slightest traces of approaching day were visible. Light came fast, and soon he could plainly distinguish the form of the bear, still guarding the dead cub; but the wolves were gone. Then up the river he heard the voice of some one calling. It was Mr. Sherwood.

How welcome was that sound; but John Newell was afraid to reply, for it seemed to him that the bear had thus far not been conscious of his presence.

Down the river came the man, pausing at intervals to yell and await an answer. Suddenly the bear began to sniff the air. It was aware of the approach of an enemy. It growled angrily and started up the river.

"Look out for the bear!" shouted the boy from the tree.

"Halloo!" came back the reply.

"Look out for the bear!" again yelled the lad.

"Halloo!" was the response a second time.

"Look out for the—!" Just then the bear

came bursting back through the brush. "Help! help!" cried the boy.

The animal came on furiously, reached the foot of the tree and reared up as if beginning to climb.

John Newell began to mount higher.

"So here you are," cried Mr. Sherwood, reaching the clearing. "What's this?" he stammered, as the angry beast started toward him.

Luckily, there were some small trees within reach, and soon the man had lifted himself a few feet from the ground.

The boy yelled, and the man roared back. The bear stood for a moment as if doubting where to make the attack; then it turned suddenly and rushed off into the woods.

The two remained in the trees until they felt sure that the animal had gone. On reaching the ground John Newell fell fainting in the arms of Charles Sherwood. Some cool water from the river revived him, when, weak and pale, he picked his way back to the camp, leaning upon the arm of the Governor.

The other boys ran from their tents to meet

and welcome John. Sympathy for his suffering seemed to bind all together and bring a unity and interest that had been wanting for a few days owing to his strange conduct.

Now that all danger was passed, the boys almost envied John's strange adventure. Not one for a moment doubted the story of losing his way in the woods and wandering for hours before dark. They listened with open mouths to the account of his experience.

"I was going to send a wireless to the Chicago papers," put in Ferdinand as John was talking. " 'Boy lost in the Michigan woods—reward for finding.' What would be the reward?" he asked laughingly.

"Three cents," answered Walter.

"Two cents," said the "Kingfisher."

In the meanwhile John was enjoying a breakfast on a tender squirrel which Mr. Sherwood had killed late on the previous evening.

"That's a fact," said Ferdinand, starting for the wireless, "I must let Mr. Baumer know that the lost boy has returned."

"How did he know that I was lost?" asked John.

"I sent him word; had nothing else to send him last night."

"I don't want it to get in the papers," protested John.

"Very well, we'll just say you are back, and that's all."

The conversation was interrupted by Farmer Riggs, who had come to give the party a trip to the copper mine and stamp-mill of Funda. He did not seem to be the least surprised when told of John's experience. For, according to him, when wolves and bears have a fight at night they will not stop until daylight.

"John is too weak to go this time," replied the Governor to the farmer's general invitation. "If you can carry four of the boys, John and I will keep house."

Charlie Zip was only too glad to get a day off. Preparations required but a few minutes; and soon the boys, with Mr. Riggs, were climbing the narrow path to the top of the hill, where the farmer's team awaited them.

CHAPTER XIII

George Rivers Again

WHEN the boys with Farmer Riggs reached Funda in the big wagon, they were met by a man whom they recognized at once as George Rivers.

"You are not all here," he said, looking over the crowd.

"No," spoke out Ferdinand as he leaped to the ground. "One is sick and Mr. Sherwood stayed with him."

"Sick," repeated the man, "too bad; very serious?"

"No, sir, he got lost and two wolves and a bear kept him up in a tree all night." And the boy gave an account of John Newell's adventure.

"Where had he been?" asked the man, feigning ignorance in the matter.

"Just went off into the woods for something, and lost his way."

"Too bad," said the man pathetically. "Let me see," he continued, "I must have met him at the camp. What is his name?"

"John Newell," replied Ferdinand.

"That's it, and his father is—is——"

"A broker," said the unsuspecting boy.

"And quite well-to-do," added George Rivers.

"I don't know much about his father's business," acknowledged young Eggert.

"I remember quite well, for I had a talk with him at your camp. His father is well fixed."

In the meanwhile the other boys had gone on toward the mine.

"Where did they get that big pile of rock?" asked Carroll Cage, pointing toward a heap of brownish stone.

"Rock indeed," replied Farmer Riggs. "I wish I had a thousand tons of that rock. It's the purest copper in the world."

It was difficult for the boys to understand that the lumps before them contained thousands of pounds of copper, for it appeared to be stone dumped as useless from some quarry.

George Rivers picked up a piece of the rock

and began to describe it. It contained lime and traces of silver and gold. Iron, lead, arsenic, and zinc were present in rather large quantities. He went on to explain about the differences between the wet and dry processes, talked on grinding, calcination, and precipitation. But no one seemed interested except Ferdinand, who put a rather large piece in his pocket to analyze in the chemistry class at the academy.

The learned talk of Mr. Rivers was cut short by the whistle which announced the arrival of a car from the mine. The boys were told to come into the wooden shed and get ready for the descent.

When they had taken their places the whistle again blew and the car started on its downward trip. The express elevators in the tallest office building were slow in comparison to the speed of the mine car. Carroll Cage whispered a prayer to his guardian angel, for he felt that he needed some heavenly protection in this dark descent.

Suddenly everything was flooded with electric light. A fairy-land it seemed, five hundred feet

below the surface of the earth, an electric fairy-land. Electricity not only lighted the place, but electric drills cut deep into the ore, and small electric cars brought the ore to the elevator; electric radiators were used to drive out the cool and dampness, and electric stoves cooked or warmed the meals for the employees.

As the boys wandered through the enchanted world, George Rivers kept close to the side of Ferdinand.

"I can't help thinking of that boy who is sick," said he.

"I am sure he is well by this time," replied the lad.

"Such a shock often leaves its effects for months," explained the man. "Are you certain that he had fully recovered?"

"Oh, yes, sir."

"And he was out all night."

"Yes, sir. Mr. Sherwood found him in the tree early this morning."

"Bears and wolves are as gentle as deer this time of the year," said the man. "You say a wolf killed a young cub?"

"That's the way I understood it."

"It's probably correct and that accounts for the fight. It was a fight over one of their young. A bear will pass you by in the woods these days and just look at you like a cow or a horse will do, but if its young is near and especially if it is wounded or in danger, then look out for a fight. Wolves, too, are shy and timid during summer, but if one approaches too near their young they will show fight. But coming back to the boy, I can recall him quite well. In fact, I believe I remember the name of the street on which he lives. It's something like Willow Street. Is there a Willow Street in Chicago?"

Now, George Rivers had an object in view in talking about John Newell, for he wished to find out whether the boy had spoken the truth to him, and whether he had given the correct street and address. He was convinced now that John's father was a broker and that socially he was well connected. It only remained to verify the street and the exact number of the house. If John Newell had given these correctly, the man had all the information necessary to press his claims, in

case the boy did not make prompt payment for the copper.

"Say, Walter," asked Ferdinand, calling to the boy, who was a few feet away, "does John Newell live on Willow Street?"

"Yes."

"What's the number?"

"Why, what do you want with the number?"

"Nothing in particular; I was talking to this man about him."

"Let me see," said Walter, "three—three, yes, three hundred and fifty—yes, fifty-two, for it's the first house on the right side of the street—352—that's the number."

"Do you think he is very sick?" asked the man.

"No, sir."

"I met him at the camp the other day and rather liked him," said George Rivers.

"I don't think he's very sick," said Walter, "just tired and sleepy after being in the tree all night."

"So your friend was telling me," replied Rivers, pointing toward Ferdinand, who had walked on to join the crowd. "It sounds almost

like a story—a boy in a pine-tree, watching a bear and two wolves fight around a camp-fire—a story, yes, a real, real story," repeated he.

"It wasn't much of a story," insisted the boy. "I wouldn't want to be in a story like that. I don't mind canoes turning over, or falling into rivers and getting wet, and all such things; but I don't want any bear and wolf fights in mine."

"But it makes a good story when it is over," replied the man.

Then he asked more questions about John Newell. In fact, he managed to talk to each of the party about his young accomplice, until he was convinced that the boy's father was a wealthy broker. Moreover, he was sure of the address. He now began to talk about indifferent topics and to show the boys the mine.

The visitors were led into a dark, damp section; then out where the hydraulic drills were cutting into the ore; then out again where the walls of this wondrous world were gleaming like myriads of precious gems. It was so strange and bewitching, that the hour's visit seemed but a few minutes.

Then the whistle blew for the ascent and all ran to take their places. Up through the dark hole the car sped, soon bringing the boys into the bright sunlight.

Farmer Riggs was waiting for them. Into the big wagon they bounded, and began to enjoy the lunch which they had brought.

Much to their joy they found on reaching the camp that John Newell had entirely recovered from the shock, and was fishing with Mr. Sherwood.

CHAPTER XIV

When the Wireless was Needed

"HALLO, going traveling?"

"Come, take a walk down the road," replied John Newell to this question of Walter Stanley.

The latter agreed, although he did not understand why John was so serious, and why he wore his coat this early in the morning.

"Are you still frightened by the wolves and bears?" asked Walter, for it was the second day after John's adventure.

"It's no fun to get lost and have them fighting under you all night," answered John.

The boys exchanged but few words as they walked up the narrow path to the top of the hill.

"Walter," said John after a short pause, "I'm thinking of going back to Chicago."

"Why? What has happened?"

"Oh, not much, but I am tired of the camp, and I don't like one of the fellows."

"Who?" Walter wanted to know, as the two resumed their walk.

"I don't like to say; but it's Charlie Zip."

"Uncle Charles said last night that the cook was a fine boy," put in Walter.

"He may be, but he's not my kind."

"He is only a cook; and you don't have to go with him."

"Yes, but he's making himself one of the party."

"Uncle Charles told him to."

"Very well, then I'll go."

All the while the boys were getting further from the camp.

"Good-bye, Walter, and thank you for bringing me all the same."

"Where are you going?"

"I am going to walk to Funda and take the train. I can reach Funda before three, and catch the Chicago train at Keeseville at eight."

"Gee!" exclaimed Walter, digging his toes into the ground.

"I brought you this far to explain things," said John Newell. "I am in no hurry to get my valise, just pack up the few things I have and send them along with the camp outfit when you break up. Good-bye," and John Newell reached out his right hand.

"What will Uncle Charles and the boys say?" asked Walter.

"Just tell them that I tired of camping," answered John, and started down the narrow road toward Funda.

Walter Stanley stood watching his companion until the trees hid him from view, then he turned and ran to the camp. "John Newell has gone home," he shouted to Uncle Charles, as he neared the place.

"I think it is the best thing that could have happened," said Mr. Sherwood when the boys were quiet. "John Newell may be a good boy, but for some reason he wasn't entering into the spirit of the vacation. Probably he is homesick. At any rate, I for one am glad that he has gone."

That afternoon the Governor called Ferdinand

Eggert aside. "For some time I have suspected young Newell of stealing," he explained, "and now my suspicion is only increased. If he stole the money from Walter and Carroll, as I believe he did, then he may have stolen the money and watch from that lady on the train. At any rate I believe that we are justified in taking action. Say nothing to the other boys, but send this message to the operator at Keeseville."

Ferdinand took the note, which read as follows: "Tell the police to search boy on Funda train, bound for Chicago. Fourteen years old—sharp-featured—long, pointed nose. See whether he has a gold watch with initials: C. P. Do not arrest."

"You see," explained Mr. Sherwood, "if he reaches the city with the watch, he can sell it. If we have proof that he had the watch on his person I can give the information to the railroad company to sue and recover damages."

The message was received by the Keeseville operator; but the authorities took no action and allowed the boy to board the train for Chicago. Then the mayor of the town, feeling that he had

made a mistake, sent a dispatch to police headquarters in Chicago.

The next morning as John Newell, Sr., entered his office in the Board of Trade Building he was handed a dispatch which read as follows:

"On board Northwestern for Chicago. Made a deal in copper which will bring five hundred or more. Ask me no questions when I meet you. Due in Chicago at noon.

JOHN NEWELL, JR."

"There's the boy for you!" cried the father, handing the dispatch to his assistant, "I always said he'd take after the old man. Only fourteen, and turned a copper deal. Wants it kept secret, too; shrewd of him to put it that way." And the father walked the floor repeating: "That's the lad for you! That's the lad for you! Giving up his vacation, too! Takes right after me! I am proud of the lad."

Two hours later the train bearing young Newell to Chicago stopped at a small station some twenty-five miles from the city. Among the few

passengers who boarded it was a detective in citizen's clothes from the Chicago police force, who had been sent by officials in response to the dispatch from the mayor of Keeseville.

The officer walked through the three coaches unnoticed, and yet his trained eye caught sight of the boy for whom he was looking. Returning to the seat occupied by John Newell he sat by the boy's side.

"Have you the time?" he asked.

Pulling from his pocket a gold watch the boy looked at it and replied: "A quarter to eleven."

"A fine ticker you have," said the man reaching over and taking the watch. "I see it has your initials—C. P."

"No, sir, my name is Newell—John Newell."

"I see," added the stranger as if indifferent. He pulled from his pocket a morning paper and began to read.

"Have you the ball scores?" John wanted to know.

"Oh, yes, take the sheet. I'm through with it."

Each read in silence for a few minutes.

"Several arrests in the city yesterday for

minor thefts," remarked the stranger, handing the boy a page with an account of the work of the police.

"Oh, the police are no good!" sneered John. "I know all about 'em. They'd never get me."

"Don't be too sure of it, my young friend. A fellow may beat 'em at times, but they are sure to get him. Yes–yes," he drawled out, "sure–to–get–'im. Here's a fellow who stole some jewelry and they got him before the next night," and the detective held the paper in front of the boy. John colored a little as he read the account. "Oh –yes, we–get–'em; for I may as well tell you that I am on the force," and the stranger unbuttoned his coat and showed his star.

John Newell left his seat to get a drink of water. The detective followed him to the cooler.

As the boy opened up a paper drinking cup, and held it under the cooler, the officer noticed that he trembled.

"What makes you so nervous?" asked the man.

"None of your business!" but John spilled half the water as he attempted to drink.

The man followed him back to his seat, but the culprit rose at once to go to another part of the coach.

"Keep your seat," said the officer. "You are under arrest for stealing that gold watch," and he showed the dispatch from Keeseville.

"That wireless did it," whimpered the boy.

"So you own up?"

John Newell did not reply.

"You just remarked that the police would never get you. Don't make an attempt to get away, or I'll put the handcuffs on. Now answer these questions:

"How much money did you steal?"

"Fifteen dollars from the woman, but I didn't steal it. I found the bag on the floor, then next morning I was afraid to tell."

"Did you steal anything else?"

"I took about twelve dollars from one of the boys for traveling; but I intended to return it."

"What is your father's name?"

"John Newell."

"His business?"

"Broker."

"Where?"

"39 South La Salle Street."

Big tears were now gathering in the boy's eyes.

"Your home address?" continued the man sternly.

"352 West Willow Street."

The boy was questioned about the camping and was made to give the names of his companions with such facts as convinced the officer that he was telling the truth.

"The dispatch asks the law not to hold you. Perhaps the gentleman at the camp has said something in your favor. If you do not attempt to escape I promise to release you after consulting with your father and getting him to go on your bail."

John Newell quite broke down when he heard that he had to face his father. But the officer was inexorable on this point.

The train was now drawing into the Northwestern station; and in less than half an hour John Newell opened the door of his father's office.

"Ha, the young broker! I am proud of you, John," were the words of greeting. "But you are crying, boy! What has happened?"

"Let me explain," said the officer stepping forward.

When he had finished the statement, the father broke out defiantly: "The boy has never stolen! He wouldn't steal! His account is quite natural! He found the bag and being a timid and bashful boy, did not know what to do! He says that he intended to return the twelve dollars to his companion!" And Mr. Newell paced the office in a fury.

"Will you come over to the court and give bail?" asked the officer coolly.

"This is a disgrace on my family and could have been avoided!" continued the man, ignoring the officer's question. "I'll settle with Charles Sherwood! I'll settle with him! I never wanted my boy to join the party, and this is what comes of it! Family disgraced! disgraced! disgraced!!!"

The officer stood motionless and imperturbable.

This irritated the man all the more.

"It's all right for you cold-hearted individuals to execute what you think is the law! You never stop to consider the disgrace of a family—disgrace! disgrace!!!"

But John Newell, Sr., finally cooled down. He went with the officer and gave bail. Sending his son home, he returned to his office.

CHAPTER XV

Carroll Cage Goes A-Fishing

CARROLL CAGE was in an awful plight. His face was scratched; his right hand was bleeding; his shirt and cap were torn. The bait can was gone, the line and hooks were gone, and even Mr. Sherwood's silvered reel was gone! It happened this way:

Carroll decided that he wished to go a-fishing all alone. If he went in company he was sure to talk so much and so loud that the trout would be frightened away. Besides, he wanted to prove that he had mastered the art of casting for trout and of landing them along a wooded bank. Mr. Sherwood permitted him to use his fine, new reel, and assisted him in digging worms and preparing a lunch.

Down the river bank the boy strolled with many a promise that he would bring to the camp a plentiful repast.

A quiet pool was soon reached.

Imitating Mr. Sherwood he crept cautiously toward the bank and cast his line with becoming skill. He did not have to wait long, for the trout seemed unusually hungry. A quick jerk and he could feel a prize struggling to escape.

But he forgot the branches above him. Soon high overhead a fish was dangling from a limb of a tree. The more he pulled and worked to release the line, the more it seemed to get tangled in the impending branch.

Nothing daunted he climbed the small tree, and with his knife cut off the branch, for the main limb was so small that it would not bear his weight. The knife was dull, and the half-dead pine was hard and tough. Cut! cut! cut! But all the time his hand grew red and blistered. He persevered, however, until the hook and line were lying on the ground beneath him.

What a twisted-twisted line he found on reaching the bank! How could it ever have been wound and rewound about the pine limb? Instead of disentangling the line Carroll was making things more and more complicated. Each

time he pulled the hook or the lead through the knotty mass he only tangled—tangled—tangled the line the more.

Carroll was too interested to observe that a visitor had approached. This visitor walked out from the bushes, eyed the boy for a while, and then came closer. Then the visitor stood watching the lad—watching him very intently. Still the visitor was so quiet, the tread of the visitor was so soft, that Carroll worked and tangled, and tangled and worked, while the visitor crept closer and closer.

Carroll Cage felt the warm breath of something standing close behind him. Turning in his fright he was amazed to see a young deer with its tongue reaching out to lick his hat. The animal was in no way frightened, but with its large, innocent eyes looked deep into the face of the boy. They seemed equally innocent—the lad and the deer! The boy was too dazed to move; the visitor seemed unconscious of any danger.

Then suddenly without any warning the little creature turned and leaped toward the brush. It seemed to realize, in an instant, that it was in

danger, that it had ventured too far away from its kind.

The front foot of the deer was caught in the line. Away it started, pulling with it the entangled branch and line and reel. Carroll leaped to his feet only to frighten the deer the more. This little creature, which appeared so weak and innocent, suddenly developed strength and speed.

Carroll succeeded in getting hold of the reel only to find himself dragged away from the river. Feeling that he had not sufficient strength to hold the deer, he relaxed his grasp, and saw to his dismay the animal disappear in the woods dragging with it the line and precious reel.

Standing alone in the woods he realized that he had run or rather had been pulled a considerable distance from the river. His hand was bruised and bleeding, his face was scratched, and his cap was gone. It was found later among some tall bushes.

Seated on a rock near the bank of the river Carroll Cage tried in vain to summon up courage to return to the camp and to face Mr. Sherwood. Back into the woods he went. How dark

and somber it seemed! He was startled at the note of a bird or the breaking of twigs beneath his feet. He feared to venture further; besides, there did not appear the slightest chance of following up the trail. The line was too badly entangled by this time to be of any further use and the reel was probably broken.

Returning to the river a second time he again sat and looked out over the water. Big tears gathered in his eyes.

Up the bank he saw a man picking his way slowly, and soon recognized him as the one who had visited the camp, and who had met the party in the copper mine.

"What're you crying about, boy?" asked the stranger.

"Lost my fishing-line."

"Oh, that's nothing! Once when I was fishing, a whale swam up to the shore and swallowed my line and pole."

"My pole is gone, too."

"Who took it?"

"A deer."

"Look here, boy, how could a deer be down

in that water and bite at your hook? I've heard of wild ducks being caught on a line, but this is the first time that I ever heard of a fellow catching a deer," laughed the visitor as he sat down by the side of the disconsolate youth.

"The deer wasn't in the water."

"Where was it?"

"Right where you are sitting."

"Oh, I see!" said the man, "it was a young deer."

"Yes, sir."

"And it walked right up to you?"

"Yes, sir."

"I believe you. A young deer is the biggest fool in the country. During the summer it will walk right up to a farmer's house and stand looking at the children. It will step into a garden and eat all your vegetables. You never know when it is going to get frightened. It seems to conclude all at once that it has made a mistake and is in the wrong place. It kicks up its hind legs, and away it goes. So it just kicked up its hind legs, and got caught in your fishing line, and the rest is easily told. Am I right?"

"Yes—s-s-sir," stammered the boy.

"I can tell you something else that happened," continued the man. "When you looked at that innocent little critter you thought it could not run."

"Yes, sir," and the boy's eyes opened wide.

"But it could run like the very mischief."

"Yes, sir, it ran and dragged me along with it."

"Just what I was going to say," put in the man. "You thought that a young deer was as weak as a kitten. But it seemed as strong as an ox."

"It was strong enough to pull me."

"You can't fish and hunt without accidents," explained the man. "I have been killed by bears several times. Whales and large catfish have pulled me miles into the lake. Once an angry deer tossed me over the top of the highest tree in the woods, and broke every bone in my body."

"You aren't dead now," replied Carroll with bewildered look.

"Not exactly; but I wanted you to understand

that unlucky things will happen out in the woods."

"And you were fibbing to me," protested the lad, whose delicate conscience would not let such evident falsehoods pass unchallenged.

"To be truthful with you," acknowledged the man, "I am glad I met you, for I want to ask you about one of your party. The boy who lost his way in the woods and spent the night in the tree. Let me see, what is is his name?"

"John Newell," was the reply.

"That is it. How is he?"

"Why, he has gone."

"Where?"

"Back to Chicago, we think."

"I understood that his father was rich," and George Rivers watched the lad intently.

"He is a broker and is worth lots of money," said the boy.

"And he left the camp and went back to Chicago?"

"Yes, sir."

"Did he ever tell you what happened when he was lost?"

"No, sir, except that he had to spend the night in the woods."

The conversation ran on until George Rivers was convinced that his youthful associate, John Newell, had not revealed anything about the visit to the place where the stolen copper was hid, or of the agreement about selling the copper in Chicago. Then the man turned the subject to more wonderful adventures—the number of times he had been killed by Indians and devoured by bears—all so wonderful and strange that Carroll quite forgot his own mishaps of a few minutes previous.

The interesting talk was interrupted by the approach of Mr. Sherwood, who laughed heartily when he learned of Carroll's adventure.

"Don't mind the reel," said he, "I have fished all I intended to this season, and next year I may want a new kind. The line served many trips, and wasn't worth carrying back to Chicago. That scratch on your face will heal in two days and your hand will be well in the morning. You have found your cap, and we can mend your pants to-night. That settles the matter. Every

vacation is supposed to have its accidents and this is yours."

"Of course, of course!" put in George Rivers. "I was just telling the boy how many times I have been killed by Indians and devoured by bears."

"But he hasn't," said innocent Carroll, "for he is still alive."

The lad had dreaded to meet Mr. Sherwood; but the latter was so indifferent about the loss of the reel, and spoke so kindly that tears were dried and anxiety vanished. In fact, Mr. Sherwood agreed to keep the matter a secret, as he saw how keenly Carroll would feel the taunts of the other boys. Luckily no one suspected any mishap. They took no notice of the scratched face and bruised hand, for such trifles were parts of the day's program.

It was only when class had resumed and Carroll read a composition on trapping a deer, that the story of his adventure was gradually known.

George Rivers had now met the boys of the camp at the Copper Mine and had talked long with Carroll about John Newell. The man was

convinced that John had slipped away to Chicago to avoid any possibility of being suspected and to begin to negotiate at once for the sale of the copper. After a short conversation on indifferent topics he sauntered down the stream, leaving Mr. Sherwood and Carroll free to return to the camp.

CHAPTER XVI

Fun and a Visit

AFTER the departure of John Newell an unusual spirit of fun and adventure had seized the crowd. They decorated the tents and the tables with the most beautiful and delicate ferns; they gathered cans full of thimble berries; they fished, bathed, and canoed during the day; they sang, and yelled, and played tricks on each other at night as they gathered around the great camp fire. There was no more trouble or friction. Charlie Zip occasionally forgot his good resolution about the use of profane language, but he always apologized and started anew. The other boys helped him in his work around the stove so that he could share in the sports.

"I see that I am in the right place," said a man as he walked into the camp one noon. "I had only to follow the wires from the top of the hill."

It was the operator from Keeseville, Mr. Clair Baumer.

It seemed like a visit from an old friend, as he had been in communication with the party daily.

"Welcome to our camp," said the Governor, as he introduced the visitor to each of the boys.

"I want to congratulate you," said the operator, as he shook hands with Ferdinand. "You are expert in dispatching. Who swung the wires from those pines?"

"Spider did it," and Carroll Cage smiled.

"No, Legs did it," claimed Walter Stanley.

"We all did it," put in Ferdinand.

"No, we must give our young friend the honor that is due him," said Mr. Sherwood. "It's the work of our scientist and wireless operator, Ferdinand Eggert."

"As clever a piece of work as ever I saw," replied Mr. Baumer.

"We have all kinds of talent in this party," explained Mr. Sherwood. "Come over, I will introduce you to the cook."

After dinner the visitor pronounced Charlie

Zip as good a cook as Ferdinand was an operator.

During the meal reference had been made to the bear killed by Mr. Sherwood, and all went to the barrel where, according to the instruction of Mr. Baumer, the hide had been put in salt water.

As the visitor proceeded to measure the skin, which was stretched upon the ground, he expressed some surprise at the size. He measured it a second time and a third; then he consulted a small note-book.

"Gentlemen," said he, "this is the biggest bear killed in Michigan as far as records have been kept. I have been an agent for the Field Museum since the time of the Chicago World's Fair. The institution has made an effort to collect specimens of all North American animals, as they are fast becoming extinct. Of course this is not the season of the year for the fur; still I am sure that the museum authorities will pay all the expenses of shipping, and if the skin is good and can be mounted, you should get at least fifty dollars for this specimen."

"Great hunter!" cried out Mr. Sherwood as he expanded his chest.

"Where is that little dog?" Ferdinand wanted to know. "If it had stayed at home the bear would have been frightened, and I would have gotten the fifty dollars."

But Dover had been thrown into the river so often of late that he remained at some distance from the crowd.

Mr. Baumer had come to fish; but before beginning the sport he wanted to know whether there was a kingfisher's nest in the neighborhood.

"I am called the 'Kingfisher'," broke in smiling Carroll, "and my nest's right inside that tent."

"Yes, yes," explained the Governor, "at one time he didn't talk enough, and now he chatters away all day, just like a kingfisher."

"Well, perhaps he has attracted other kingfishers. The Field Museum has a number of specimens, but the managers want a photo, showing how the birds burrow into the banks for their nest."

"Carroll and myself can probably help you," added the Governor, "for we saw two birds when we were fishing."

The Governor offered to stay at the camp, while all four boys went with the operator to look for the nest. Carroll, who was quite sure that he could lead them to the exact spot, proved to be an experienced guide.

"Let me first take a photo of the bank," said Mr. Baumer, "and then we'll get a shot at the door of Mr. and Mrs. Bird's house."

"There is Mr. Bird now," cried Carroll, for a kingfisher had lit on a dead branch overhead. "Ain't it wrong to steal a bird's nest?" he asked of the man.

"Not if you need it for a museum or other purposes."

"Mr. Kingfisher is objecting to our coming here," joined in Walter.

"He can soon build another house," said the visitor.

"Now, boys, dig away," he continued, for they had brought a pick and a shovel.

After removing only a few inches of the nar-

row entrance a second photo was taken, and this continued until the party had dug three feet into the bank. The little home was empty. However, the operator got what he wished, namely, the nest and the views of the entrance. He felt sure that the taxidermist at the museum would be able to make an exact reproduction of the bank. Visitors at the museum would be able to see just how a kingfisher approached its nest and constructed it.

That afternoon the two men enjoyed a successful short fishing trip down the river. When alone with Mr. Sherwood, the operator told him of the success of the Chicago detective in arresting young Newell. The boy was out on bail furnished by his father, and would be tried as soon as Mr. Sherwood returned to the city.

"I suspected him of having that watch, and didn't wish to give him a chance to sell it," replied the Governor after they had talked the matter over.

"You did right. Are you going to have him prosecuted?"

"I think I'll ask to have the case dismissed,

provided we recover the money and the watch."

"There is no doubt about your watch or its full value."

"Such things are disagreeable," acknowledged the Governor. "It will teach me to be more careful in future in selecting a party. I had to let the larger boy know what I did, for he sent the message; but I have told the others nothing, and they seem to have quite forgotten young Newell."

Later, as the two men picked their way along the river toward the camp, Mr. Clair Baumer remarked:

"I am certainly enjoying the visit with you and the boys, sir; and with your permission I would like to invite myself to lengthen my stay for a week."

"Two weeks and more," came the quick reply of Charles Sherwood. "No, we will not be here two weeks, but I assure you that you will be welcome as long as we are here."

"Kind of you," said the wireless man, "I will insist on paying my board and will try and make myself useful."

"You are welcome to our simple fare. I think we have enough for the table."

"Let me ask another favor," said the stranger, as the two seated themselves on an old log near the river bank not far from the camp. "You know there are a number of wolves and even a few bears in the woods around. I would like to hunt them for a week in the winter."

"How I would enjoy it," interrupted Mr. Sherwood, with an emphasis that left no doubt about his desire to join in the sport.

"Then let us hunt for a week," suggested Mr. Baumer.

"Can't get away from my business; besides, one vacation is all I can afford. But let me hear your plans."

"I will explain them with an apology. I want to construct a winter hut where your camp is."

"Certainly, certainly, we'll all join in and lend a hand."

"I am afraid that the work will be too much for us; I thought of getting two lumbermen who could cut down the trees and notch the logs. We

can help a little and supervise; but I am afraid the work would be too hard for us."

"Capital idea," exclaimed Mr. Sherwood, who seemed bent on granting every request of the visitor.

"I got permission of the owner a year ago," explained the wireless man, "but I did not do anything; now is the time. I will see that the men in no way interfere with you or the boys. These men are accustomed to sleep out in the woods and will cook their own meals."

"We will make them feel at home," came the answer, "they will be members of the party," insisted the Governor, with something of his old firmness.

"This affair is progressing rather rapidly," laughed the visitor. "I mentioned it with some hesitation. But since you approve of it I will go on with the matter. In the first place it will be necessary to send a message to Keeseville to find out whether the man who took my place can stay for a week. Then whether we can get two lumberjacks. I will have to explain just what

men I want. There are several in the town who will do the work."

After further conversation and perfecting of plans, Mr. Baumer went to young Eggert's wireless station. In the meanwhile Mr. Sherwood told the boys of the prospective house building and the possibility of lengthening their trip for a few days.

In a few minutes Mr. Baumer joined the party and informed them all that he could get a week's absence from the station at Keeseville. In less than an hour a second message announced that the two men had been secured and that they would take the afternoon train.

CHAPTER XVII

The Pirates

WHEN Mr. Clair Baumer told the boys that the two lumbermen had not only been secured, but were on their way, there was general rejoicing in the camp. Charlie Zip promised to have a warm supper ready for them on their arrival; Walter and Carroll offered their cots for the night.

But the operator explained that they would bring their tent, and cook their own meals. Of course he would insist on the two men taking supper that night, as it would be too late for them to prepare anything for themselves; after that, the men would prefer to live apart, as they were Norwegians and did not speak English.

A great camp-fire was kept burning near the river, where all gathered to welcome the strangers.

Suddenly Dover barked. "He sees them," said

Mr. Baumer, who was in the crowd. He was not mistaken, for in a few seconds the two men emerged from the thick foliage that overshadowed the path. What heavy loads they carried! Tenting and pots and pans and axes and saws and ropes, and everything for camping and building a house. The men were almost concealed by the great bundles upon their backs.

Soon they were relieved of their burdens and stood smiling before the camp-fire.

"They look like pirates," whispered Carroll Cage, recalling a picture of two men with long beards in some book of adventure.

"We'll call them the two pirates," joined in Walter Stanley.

"But they aren't dangerous looking," added Carroll, who observed the smile of content on the face of each.

They were low statured men, powerful and thick shouldered. They seemed just suited for the heavy work of handling logs. As it was discovered the following morning that one's beard was slightly red, they were called "Red Pirate" and "Black Pirate." Good natured Pirates they

were, and they smiled all the more when Mr. Baumer succeeded in explaining to them the nicknames given them by the boys.

After enjoying the supper which Charlie Zip had prepared, the two men sauntered along the river looking for a place for their tent. They were soon satisfied with the location, and in a short time were prepared to rest.

That night all retired with the feeling that a pleasant surprise awaited them in the morning. Walter and Carroll had agreed to be up early and join in the work. They slept until late, however, and were awakened by a loud crash. Leaping from their cots they saw a great pine tree which the two lumbermen had cut.

Soon the work began in earnest. The plans as roughly sketched by Mr. Baumer called for a hut eighteen feet long by fourteen wide, one window, a double door, and a fireplace with a chimney on the outside. This latter was to be built of flat stones from the river bed, with the crevices filled with mud of a clayish soil dug near by, the same being used between the chinks in the sides of the hut.

Late in the morning Farmer Riggs arrived with his team and assisted in hauling the logs from the woods to the place selected for the house. As Mr. Baumer insisted on using trees that were straight, it was necessary to go some little distance into the woods to secure the suitable timber. Besides, he wished his house to stand in the midst of trees, and for that reason did not wish to cut down those in the immediate vicinity.

It required but a short time to fell a tree eight inches thick, to notch it at the ends, and lift the log into its place. By noon the walls were eight feet high. Mr. Baumer explained that the work would be slower when they began to cut the shingles and put on the roof.

While resting after dinner the Red Pirate noticed through a rift in the pines that a threatening cloud was gathering in the west. The sultry weather, too, indicated rain.

"Say, the Pirates are getting ready to attack us," remarked Walter to Carroll, as he observed the two men arise from the ground and point toward the camp.

"No, they are looking at the clouds," explained the latter.

"See them coming this way," affirmed Carroll.

"Let us get the guns," was the answer.

"That big red-headed fellow could swallow you alive," said young Stanley.

"And the other one could boil you in a big pot," replied Carroll Cage, who had read of some cannibals feasting upon a captive.

The men began to gesticulate all the more, and to appear really excited. They pointed to the clouds, the trees, the tents. Evidently they feared some danger.

Without a word of explanation they ran to lower the tents. By broken expressions they succeeded in warning Mr. Baumer and through him the rest of the party of the danger. All were ordered to run within the uncovered enclosure of the new hut.

Overhead there was a stir among the tops of the pines. Then the trees moaned and the interlocking branches swished and chafed. Two enormous trunks rasped against each other

with a distressing sound, long and often repeated.

The whole forest was enveloped in a sudden and unnatural darkness, causing the fire under a boiling kettle to glow in the mid-day gloom.

Now a hurricane swept on the river. How the trees bent and groaned, and groaned and bent again. It was nature measured against her own strength. The strength of a day was gathered against the strength of a century's growth. The onward rush, the terrifying rush, the seemingly irresistible rush of the great monster wind was matched against the pines, with their roots deep set, their trunks firm, and their fiber hardened to withstand the terrible shock of the summer's storm.

And now to the fury of the wind was added the rain, which fell in a blinding downpour. The little fire was quenched, and all was dark as night, except when the great streams of lightning flashed overhead.

Terrified and drenched the boys huddled together in the uncovered hut, blinking with each flash of light, gasping as they listened to the

dashing of limbs overhead and the crushing of trees around them. On the opposite side sat the four men consoled by the single fact, that they were in the safest place that could be provided in the present danger.

Which would conquer—the hurricane or the pine forest? For a while it seemed that victory must be with the former. In the tearing and the bending and uprooting of pines it appeared that not one would be left unscathed. But it was only a temporary victory, for soon the great black cloud went screaming away like a hideous, giant monster worsted in a combat.

The light of the day came back almost as soon as it disappeared. Forth from their place of refuge went the boys and men, drenched and chilled, only to find that a trunk of a tree lay across the two tents.

A fire was started and clothes were dried. It was not long before work was resumed on the hut.

Late that afternoon George Rivers again appeared at the camp. Although he had gotten all the information desirable in regard to John New-

ell, and had nothing to gain by talking to the party, still something seemed to lure him to the place where he first met his young accomplice in evil doing.

The visitor was talking with Mr. Charles Sherwood when suddenly the Red Pirate, armed with an axe, came up to the two men. George Rivers did not wait until the man reached him, but turned and ran down to the river bank, followed by the Pirate.

The latter returned shortly and made it known through Mr. Baumer that the intruder owed him some money.

It was the last visit of George Rivers to the camp.

CHAPTER XVIII

Within the Winter Cabin

AMONG the trees which the storm had crushed to the ground were pines which had been dead long enough to dry and harden without rotting. These were selected by the Pirates for making shingles. After being sawed into sections about two feet in length, they were trimmed with an axe, then split into shingles about an inch in thickness.

"Just as good a shingle as could be turned out by a mill," remarked Mr. Baumer, picking one up and showing it to the Governor.

"This house building goes faster than I imagined," replied the latter. "Your men finished the walls yesterday, cut the shingles and put them on to-day, and promise to complete the chimney to-morrow."

"I calculated they could do the work in this time," replied the operator. "I could not afford

to spend much money on a house which I'll occupy but one week in a year and which I may use but once. I'll board up the window and door, and bring them ready made when I come to hunt. In this way I can send the men home on the third or fourth day."

At noon, when the boys returned from a canoe ride and a swim they were surprised to find the shingles cut and the rafters put in place.

"If another storm comes up in the night," said Ferdinand, "we can sleep in the new house without getting wet."

"But where can I cook?" asked Charlie Zip.

"You will have an ideal place to-morrow," explained the operator, "the chimney when finished will give you a better draft than you have now."

The two Pirates were surprised at the material which they had been able to get for the purpose of making the shingles. The axe was placed on top of the pine block, one stroke was given with a wooden hammer, a wedge was inserted in the crack, and a second stroke completed the work of splitting a shingle.

As the hut was under roof before nightfall, the men began to select the flat stones for the chimney. All assisted in carrying the stones from the river bed.

"I know of no other place for miles around where this ledge of rock could be found," said the operator to Mr. Sherwood and the boys. "In fact, the government survey gives the whole country as of glacial formation with round boulders as the only rock. And yet," he continued as he picked up a piece of the slatish stone, "this outcrop has never been disturbed. I am not scientist enough to know whether this deposit missed the glacial flow, or whether it was formed after the glacial period."

"What is a glacier?" asked Mr. Sherwood of the boys. "You have been going to school and should know these things."

"I know," put in Walter. "We had it last year in our physical geography. Let me see—it's—a——"

"Oh, yes—a—a," repeated Carroll.

"Yes, yes,—a—a—a," continued Ferdinand.

"Is that the kind of answer you boys give at

the Academy?" Mr. Sherwood wanted to know.

"Let this young fellow have a chance," interrupted the operator, pointing to Walter.

"It's a big mountain of flowing ice."

"Why not call it a valley of flowing ice or a field of flowing ice?" suggested Mr. Baumer.

"Well, it's something like that—it's ice and snow, and is all moving," said Walter.

"I see you understand it," acknowledged the man. "Some glaciers are so heavy that they tear up the ground beneath them and grind the rocks until they are quite round. Luckily for us this ledge was missed by the glacier, for it left layer after layer of flat stones for us to build our chimney. But get busy; these men are telling me that there is too much talking and too little work."

By noon of the third day the chimney was completed. A fire was built at once; not a large one, but just sufficient to dry the mud in the crevices.

That night, as it was chilly, all gathered within the hut in front of the glowing pine logs,

where they listened to Mr. Baumer recounting his adventures in the northern woods. The Red Pirate gave an account of walrus fishing in the Arctic Ocean, the operator acting as interpreter.

It was a stirring incident about six men on an ice-floe with the sea monsters leaping after them.

"And now you must tell us something, Uncle Charles," cried out Walter, all excited by the wonderful accounts to which he had listened.

"I am not much at story-telling," replied the Governor, "but I did hear a fish-story once which I believe will match anything that we have listened to to-night."

"Go on with it," was the general demand.

"It was down on the Ohio River," began Mr. Sherwood. "An old negro was plowing corn in a field close to the river bank. As it was a warm day he untied his mule and went to take a dip in the water.

"Some of you may not know that large catfish deposit their eggs under flat stones and stay to guard them against crawfish. At such times they are not easily frightened. In fact, the negroes

dive down, feel around under the rocks, and on finding a fish catch it by the gills and drag it out.

"The old negro, to whom I refer, felt around a rather large rock to try his luck. Lucky he was! He found a fish the size of—well—it was the size of—of—of the largest walrus that our friend hunted in the Arctic Ocean. No, it was larger—much larger—as you will see before I finish my story."

Charles Sherwood paused and stirred the logs.

"He is putting on," protested Walter.

"I'll bet it is going to be the size of a small trout," claimed Carroll.

"Yes, yes," resumed the Governor, slowly stirring the glowing coals. "A very—very big fish. The old negro got his hand under a gill and gave a—pull—pull—pull. But would you believe it, the fish didn't stir. It was so large that the old negro couldn't move it.

"After coming to the surface and taking a long breath the old gentleman tried it again. Pull—pull—pull—p-u-l-l, but the fish wouldn't move.

"Leaving the water, the colored man stood

thinking of some means of getting the monster ashore. Suddenly he began to smile. He went to the field and unhitched the mule."

"Great fish-story," cried Mr. Baumer, who tried in vain to explain it to the lumbermen.

"It was gone when he came back," asserted Carroll.

"No, no, the fish was there," said the speaker. "The negro brought with him the rope used for the plow-line. Diving down he succeeded in slipping the rope through the gills of the fish and tying it tight. Then he brought the mule close to the water's edge, and fastened the rope to the traces. 'Get up,' he cried, and started the mule down the hill."

"How much did the fish weigh?" asked the operator.

"It broke the plow-line," claimed Walter.

"It held on to the rock," said Carroll.

"I know," cried Charles Zip, "it weighed fifty pounds."

"It is a sad story, the rest of it—a—s-a-d, s-a-d story," drawled out the Governor, who sat looking into the fire.

"It's only a dream," was the explanation offered by Ferdinand.

"Tell us, Uncle Charles," protested Walter.

"Yes, yes, it–is–sad. But I must finish it. That catfish gave one flap of its tail and, Mr. Baumer and boys, the mule hasn't been heard of since that day."

The boys applauded and the operator cried aloud: "The best fish-story that I ever heard—just beats them all—just beats them all!"

The Pirates joined in with the general laughter although they understood little of what was said.

"Why, it is almost midnight," exclaimed the Governor, looking at his watch. "You boys get to bed."

"I am hungry," whined Carroll.

"So is this fellow," chimed in Charlie Zip.

All agreed that a lunch would be most welcome. When it was finished it was past one o'clock; even then the Governor had some difficulty in getting the boys to bed.

Walter and Carroll brought their cots from the tent and slept in the new hut. In fact they

made it their home during the rest of the camping.

On the following morning the two Pirates departed, much to the regret of the campers. After two days Mr. Clair Baumer also returned to his station at Keeseville, taking the bearskin for the museum. Each morning and night he and Ferdinand exchanged messages.

No other visitors came to the camp during the rest of the vacation. The days passed quickly until finally it was time for striking the tents. There was a touch of sadness in the work, and even the "Kingfisher" forgot to chatter, and fell back into his mood of silence. The camp had become a second home to the boys, who did not relish the idea of returning to the warm and dusty city. The Governor, who had already stretched the time two days, now positively refused to concede any further extension. Provisions, too, were about exhausted.

The wireless outfit was removed from the pine-trees, the tents were struck, and all the baggage lay in a heap. Then began the work of carrying everything to the top of the hill. As Farmer

Riggs was paid to help in this, his powerful arms considerably lessened the task.

And now it was noon and the farmer's horses were picking their way along the narrow road.

Suddenly Ferdinand turned and cried: "Take a last look at the two pines!"

"Good-bye, old pines!" shouted Carroll.

"Good-bye, old camp!" yelled Walter.

Yes, good-bye to the trees! Good-bye to the camp! Good-bye to the river, the darksome woods, night's music overhead, and glorious sports of day! Good-bye to it all! Good-bye to the Michigan pine forest. The Camp by Copper River, good-bye!

CHAPTER XIX

The Copper From Copper River

THE Camp by Copper River was now a memory. Vacation days had passed, and the boys had returned to school.

At the request of Mr. Charles Sherwood the case of John Newell had been dismissed from court, after the watch had been restored to its owner, and all money had been paid back to those from whom it had been taken.

Charlie Zip was working as a messenger boy in the Fowler Furniture Company.

One morning Will Starling was driving his express-wagon down West Lake Street, whistling as he went along. Then his tune stopped short and his features became serious. For six months he had worked for the Northwestern Express Company, holding the same position that Father Lilly had secured for him. Twice had his wages been raised. Although prospects seemed

bright he was not satisfied, for he did not like city life and could not grow accustomed to it. He sighed for the freedom of the country, and looked forward anxiously to the time when he would be able to get the little farm called Clay Banks. The owner had promised to let him have the farm on easy payments as soon as he could put down two hundred dollars. He had made over half the sum. How long would it take him to put aside the rest? As he was thinking over the matter, he was distracted by a voice from the street. John Newell was the one addressing him.

"Hello, kid!" said John.

"Hello, yourself!"

"Say, kid, do you want to make a little extra money?"

"I'm your man."

"Are you busy these days?"

"Not so very busy."

"Suppose you meet me every day near this place and take a load for me."

"Will I have to use the company's wagon?"

"Of course, what else could you use?"

"Can't do it; it's against orders."

"Oh, hang the orders! May be fifty dollars in it."

Fifty dollars! Will Starling thought for a moment. "Say, I'll meet you here about this time to-morrow."

"Good! Old fellow, I'll be right here," and John Newell turned and walked away.

He had entirely misunderstood the purpose of the driver. Will Starling had his faults; but one thing had been impressed upon his mind by the words of Father Lilly. He should be true to the Express Company. Time and again did the priest speak to the boys in the chapel and in the recreation room about fidelity to employers. One thoughtless, unfaithful boy could give a bad name to the whole institution, and ruin the prospects of other boys of the Home.

This lesson was remembered by Will Starling, who went to the office that afternoon, and asked to speak to the foreman. He explained that he had an offer to make fifty dollars and wanted to use the wagon.

The officer replied that it could not possibly be done, for such a concession would lead to all kinds of irregularities in the service.

As the boy was leaving the office he was called back; for it had suddenly occurred to the man at the desk that something was wrong. "How many trips will you have to make to earn the fifty dollars?" he asked.

"I forgot to ask, sir."

"Who made the offer to you?"

"A boy about my age."

"And he offered you fifty dollars?"

"That's what he said, sir."

"This is worth looking into," mused the man. "Sit down," he said. "You have been a good and faithful worker. I will make an exception for you this time. Meet the boy at the place and carry whatever he has. Work all day for him if you wish. Don't tell him you have permission. Just work and then come and report to me. Try to be here before five."

"Thank you, sir," and Will Starling went away happy.

The man at the desk called up the police head-

quarters. "This is the Northern Express Company," said he, "I've an interesting case here. Send a man around in plain clothes with motorcycle, I believe I can give him a clue to some theft."

"When will he call?"

"To-morrow morning at half-past seven."

"He will be there."

On the following morning, when Will Starling drove his wagon out of the western yard of the express company, two men were watching from the office.

"Wagon 620—boy 15 years old—driving white horse. That's sufficient," said the plain clothes man to the clerk of the Northern Express Company. "I'll follow and report."

True to his word, John Newell met the boy in the express-wagon, and both drove off toward a lumber-yard, all unconscious of the fact that they were being followed.

The wagon turned south from Lake Street to Western Avenue. Near the river the boys entered an alley and found their way into a lumber-yard.

As they drove along John Newell explained the nature of the work. His father had bought some copper in northern Michigan and had it shipped in a lumber-boat to Chicago. A man had been hired to haul the copper to an old barn rented for the purpose, had suddenly left off the work, and some one was needed to complete it. From three to five days would be required, and fifty dollars was the reward.

John Newell was telling only a part of the truth, for the man whose services had at first been secured, scenting danger, had left him after hauling but one load. John was anxious to get a registered express wagon, as it would be less open to suspicion.

Into the lumber-yard they drove; and in followed the detective on his motorcycle. The latter in a careless way, that created no suspicion, came up to the two boys, who with a man were removing some lumber from over a pile of copper bars.

All day long the man followed the boys. He learned how much copper had been brought in the vessel from Lake Superior, the location of

the barn where the treasure was being stored, and the name and address of John Newell.

Records at the police office showed that young Newell, the son of a well-known broker, had been arrested four months before for stealing.

Wires were soon busy between Chicago and Keeseville, Michigan. George Rivers and the captain of the lumber-boat were arrested.

John Newell's father was again forced to give bail, and the copper was seized by the authorities. The foreman at the lumber-yard was severely reprimanded by the court.

Two months later Rivers was sentenced to five years in the Michigan penitentiary. John Newell, being under age, was placed in the juvenile reform school, to remain until he was twenty-one.

He was sent to the kitchen and set to work under the same cook who had been kind to Charlie Zip.

"My boy," said the cook, "I have helped many a fellow to make a man of himself, and I'll do all I can for you. The last boy here was called Zip. I had a letter from him a short time ago with

the good news that he was doing well." Drawing the letter from his pocket he handed it to John Newell; but the boy turned away in a flood of tears.

In the silence that followed John Newell heard the crash of the great iron door, as it swung and was locked.

. . . . .

Charlie Zip is still working for the Fowler Furniture Company. Will Starling came in from his farm recently, and the two, who are now fast friends, visited Father Lilly. Carroll and Walter are finishing their course at Devon Academy, and with them is Ferdinand, who is a leader in the physics class.

And the bear! If you want to see the bear you have only to visit the Field Museum in Chicago—section 5, case 37. It is eating a pig and smiling—really smiling! It is known to visitors as the smiling bear—but the boys from Devon Academy call it Carroll Cage.

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